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THE SECRET SHOT



OR THE RIVALS OF MISTY MOUNT

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OR,

THE RIVALS OF MISTY MOUNT.

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THE RIVALS OF MISTY MOUNT.

CHAPTER I.

Misty Mount and its People.

If any one will take the trouble to inspect a good topographical map of the American Republic, he can hardly fail to be struck with the wonderfully mountainous nature of the western region of North Carolina. That portion of Tennessee immediately adjoining is also of an elevated, broken character; but the act of Congress which struck the line of separation along the cloud-draped battlements and sturdy bastions of the Alleghanies, (which is the general term for the entire upheaval,) threw by far the loftiest and most intricate spurs within the dominion of the Old North State. Indeed, they throng down from the north, through the Quaker State and the Old Dominion, in grim and irregular array, like invading Titans; but it is only upon their arrival in this secluded portion of the Old North State, that their winding chains become labyrinths—that their awful sublimity springs into the utterly stupendous. It seems as if there the very heart of the boiling volcanic era must have been suddenly petrified into immutable granite. Ranges unroll themselves in the wildest confusion; spur starts from spur with frightful vehemence; the black frosts of the Bald Mountains confront the grayer giants of the cloud-capped Smoky Range with terrible determination written on their stormy foreheads; and there are lower peaks piled in behind them which no mortal eye has seen; there are numerous glens and defiles where the deer still sports in pristine freedom, and where the foot of mortal being—red or white—has never trod. But, still, the sinuous, adventurous course of civilization has crept somewhat among the outer defiles; and the smoke of the lumberman's cabin or the tar-gatherer's

hut may occasionally be seen where, but a few years ago, "a monstrous loneliness possessed the wild."

But what must have been the savage grandeur of this inhospitable region eighty or ninety years ago?

Tennessee itself was almost unknown. Vast mountain ridges, which have now distinctive appellations, were nameless then, or only mentioned in the friendly Indian's legend, when he reposed by the settler's fireplace, down in the more level lands. The distant and loftier ranges were regarded as an impenetrable barrier. Nevertheless, at and before the Revolution, many a bold pioneer had hewn a home for himself and family among the fertile valleys of the more eastern spurs, and, in a few instances, settlements of considerable size had arisen at their rocky feet.

Among the more remarkable and successful of these attempts to "soften the savage Mother into smiles," was that made by an American gentleman, named Godfrey Gwin, so early as 1756. Of excellent lineage—being the son of an English baronet of affluence and power, though American born—this gentleman had entered the business of life under flattering auspices. He was the lord of an extensive plantation in the most fertile district of the coast, with numerous slaves, and a vast and growing income. But sorrow came upon his house. He had not married early; and, when life was melting into the riper age which needs the sustaining prop of sympathy and love far more than wealth and power, the Destroyer touched his prosperous household, and plucked the fullest, fairest of its blooms. The wife of Godfrey's bosom, and his eldest son—the prop and pride of his declining years—were gathered to the tomb in one fell night. He had lost other children

before this; and now but two were left him—a son and daughter of tender years. So great was his grief at this double loss that an incurable melancholy fell upon the unhappy man, until, at length, unable longer to endure the familiar scenes which constantly recalled to his burdened mind the memory of the dear departed, he formed the quixotic design of disposing of his magnificent patrimony, and seeking a new and more rugged home among the wild mountains to the westward. His friends, considering this decision as the undeliberated impulse of a nature grown morbid with grief, endeavored to persuade its abandonment; but their efforts were vain. With trappers and remote settlers for his guides, he set forth, and spent considerable time in search of a location to his fancy. This he at length hit upon, far to the west, among the lesser ranges of the Atlantic slope. He discovered a valley of remarkable fertility, well watered by the head-waters of the Catawba, and some of it naturally free of timber; the whole overbrowed by a lofty peak from the west, which went by the name of Misty Mountain, or an Indian term with that signification. Lesser chains of irregular high almost completely encircled the chosen valley on every side. The grief-stricken man seemed to find a moody kind of consolation in this romantic spot; and made every preparation for a speedy change of his abode.

His large estate was soon disposed of, and, in a few months, the child of luxury and refinement could have been seen among the mountains, tanned and hardened by healthful exposure, assiduously directing the labors of his slaves, in rearing fences and out-houses for his flocks and herds, and in breaking the rich but difficult glebe of the valley, while artisans from the northern cities were busy at work on a chosen site with the rough granite of the hills, which, he had determined, should compose the structure of a mansion-house worthy of those who should come after him. Scarcely a year was required to complete the improvements. The staunch gray mansion rose like a castle from its eminence, with the placid Catawba rolling at its feet; corn and tobacco fields grew luxuriantly on either bank; the excellent pasture of the verdant slopes afforded ample nourishment to increasing flocks and herds; the Indian tribes in the immediate vicinage were won to the white man's will by kindness; and the sun

of prosperity grew brighter every day around the smiling acres of Misty Mount, as the manor came to be called. Moreover, many of the owner's friends, who had at first endeavored to dissuade him from his purpose, were now tempted, likewise, to seek a similar home. A dozen years or so saw numerous additions to the settlement, in the shape of contiguous plantations and mansions, of more or less affluence, while a little town sprung up on the banks of the river, a few miles from Misty Mount, not far from the site of the present town of Morgantown. This settlement, which we will call Valleyton, grew into a considerable village at the outbreak of the then impending conflict.

Among those wealthy settlers who helped cultivate the fertile valley where Godfrey Gwin had vainly sought seclusion, was a family of some distinction from tidewater Virginia, by the name of Gleason. The head of this family was an Englishman by birth, and of the most ultra illiberal opinions. In various colonies he had held posts of considerable importance, (by royal appointment, of course,) and, in most cases, had made himself thoroughly detested by his servile obedience to the unjust edicts of the king and his arrogant contempt for the colonists over whom he exercised his petty power. Although a semblance of fraternity existed between the two families, the liberal American views of Gwin would often clash against the stern loyalty of the Briton, in a manner which threatened future peace. For discontent was already muttering through the colonies; eyebrows were knitting angrily, hands unconsciously clenched; and there were wide indications of the distant but certain storm.

However, there still were fair years of cloudless peace. Godfrey went on improving his estate, and, as he did so, he grew old. But a noble scion at his side, his only son, arose into promising manhood; and a lovely flower at his side, his only daughter, Ida, dreamed up into wondrous beauty and fragrance.

At the outbreak of the war for our independence, the old man had espoused the cause of the patriots with all the energy of his enthusiastic nature. Too old to fight, he was lavish of his great wealth in support of our armies. Walter, the son, had grasped his blade at the first clash of arms, and hurried to the conflict at the head of a company of horsemen, which he quickly

organized from among the young men of the valley. But there were not a few in the South who took an entirely different view of the subject. These were the Tories. The obloquy, which has fallen on many of them, was unmerited; as they, for the most part, were thoroughly conscientious in their opinions, and in their support of the king, whom they honestly believed to be possessed of a divine prerogative, which it was sacrilege to subvert. Equally natural was it for them to be hated and jealously watched by the patriotic majority. Valleyton and its vicinity were not free of this class of men; and prominent among them were Gleason and his two sons, Heartstead and Charles. The two latter joined the royal forces at the outbreak of hostilities, while the old man remained at home—much as the “Butternut” of a later day—hiding his disloyalty to liberty under an outward guise of neutrality; but each day longing for the mail that it might bring him bulletins of disaster to his country’s cause.

In the case of Heartstead Gleason, however, many regrets were mingled with his adoption of the British cause. The most prominent of these was that it involved an almost hopeless relinquishment of his passion for Ida Gwin, which, though unrequited, he had suffered himself to cherish from his youth upward. Yet, mere differences of opinion, which, in peace, are trifling seams, in time of war, widen to impassable gulfs; and the young man saw his hopes fast fading as the war-gleams flickered fiercer round their homes. Still he would not despair, but nursed his passion against hope itself, with the brooding spirit of a reckless and unprincipled nature. Jacob Gleason had his regrets in this respect also. Old age had brought avarice and meanness along with it as it crept on him; and he had often eyed the fair domains of his generous neighbor with a speculating eye as to what the future might hold in its womb if some certain person or persons should happen to die suddenly, and some other certain person, very rich, and young, and lovely withal, should fall in love with and marry his handsome scapegrace of a son, Heartstead, and bring the fair lands of Gwin and Gleason into one little principality of the wilds. This dream was sadly broken into by the war, and the lonely old man remained at home, keeping his avarice alive with the hope of better times.

The Southern colonies were comparatively little burdened with the actual presence of

the grim reality during the first few years of the struggle; though an irregular partisan warfare was almost constantly waged. The surrender of the American garrison at Charleston, under General Lincoln’s command, to the British, (May 12th, 1780,) disastrous as it was felt throughout the land, was, nevertheless, the precursor of events which, eventually, were to shake the invader from Southern soil, then almost at his mercy. Sir Henry Clinton, the British commander, deluding himself with the thought that both Georgia and the Carolinas were virtually conquered, and might soon be wholly reclaimed to the royal cause, departed from Charleston (June 6th) for New York, with the majority of his forces, leaving Lord Cornwallis with but four thousand regulars, to complete the conquest of those colonies. Whereupon Marion, Sumter, Pickens, and other brave leaders, rallied their people for contest or depredation upon the royalists and Tories; and the British commander found himself watched and laid in wait for by a vigilant and active foe at every step he undertook. The patriotic spirit of the people, however, was almost hopelessly crushed by the battle of Camden, (Aug. 16th,) which resulted in the disastrous defeat of the American army under General Gates, (Lincoln’s successor,) and their compulsory retreat to Hillsborough, in North Carolina. This unfortunate event left South Carolina completely at the mercy of Cornwallis, who, shortly after, took up his march northward in the hope of driving Gates into Virginia before reinforcements could reach him from the North. At this momentous time, when the dwellers of Valleyton and vicinity were full of anxiety at the rumored approach of the invader, we take up the thread of our story.

CHAPTER II.

Portraits, and a Deed of Darkness.

“Vice slipped from his tongue: Oh treachery!
The assassin spoke out from his laugh; hissed
through
His make-believe; and coiled like an adder
In his too sunny smile.”

It was in the golden depths of Autumn. The trees were turning into tenderer hues of yellow, saffron and ardent red; the golden grain was gathered and stored; hour by hour the mountains looked more hazy and somber as the cooler breezes took their

wooded summits from the North; and Cat-tawba river loitered like a shining dream through the still bright verdure of the valley below. The sun was about setting through a glory of gold and purple, when a group of several persons might have been observed seated on the broad, southerly-facing porch of Misty Mount manor, with their eyes bent upon the lovely and placid scene that lay below them.

The most prominent of these was the owner of the estate, Godfrey Gwin, whose benevolent face was somewhat the rosier from the excitement of the moment. His few white hairs were flowing in the fresh gale. Seated at his left side, with her little hand caressingly placed upon his knee, was a maiden whose beauty would have startled the hardest anchorite from his bended knees. About the medium height, her figure seemed absolutely perfect. The plump robustness of the bare and snow-white arms, so daintily tapering to the delicate hands; the full contour of the bust; the well-developed symmetry of the firm shoulders; and the strong but slender neck, gave tokens of that blending of strength and beauty which now is so seldom met with among American women. Such beauty the old Greek poets and sculptors successfully embodied in the conception of their huntress-goddess, "fleet-footed Diana." The face was very fair, a perfect oval and a crystal skin. Her eyes were as blue as a mid-sea billow with the sunlight flashing through it; her hair profuse and golden, with a burnished ripple chasing it over the temple's arch. It is hardly necessary to say that this was Ida of Misty Mount. A young man of thirty or thereabouts, sat on the opposite side of the table from the old gentleman. This was Captain Walter Gwin, at home on sick leave. He, evidently, was convalescent, though his fine face still was somewhat pale, and he wore a light bandage around his left hand. Near him, but standing on the ground, with his elbow leaning upon the floor of the porch, was the pensive figure of a muscular Indian, half clad in leggings and blanket, but his broad, dark chest and right arm free. Two or three black children were romping on the lawn immediately in front. The entire group was eminently picturesque and delightful.

At length the old man broke the silence.

"What sorrow has fallen like a dark mantle upon the free spirit of the Thunder-Mocker?" he said, turning kindly to the

pensive savage, and imitating, as was his habit, the poetic phraseology of the red-man.

There was something dark in the severe eye of the savage as he lifted it to the questioner's face.

"The soul of Wandalo is indeed dark," he replied, "but it is not at the thunder which the Great Spirit flings around his throne. Such never harmed Wandalo. It is the thunder of the white man that has brought this gloom upon his spirit. He had four brave sons. They were as the mountain pines that lift their heads to heaven. What are they now? They are as the mountain pines that lay uprooted in the black ravine, with the hurricane scourging through their withered branches. It was the white man's thunder did this. The soul of Wandalo is bright no more."

"The four brave sons of Wandalo had no business to fight for the Red-coats then," said the younger Gwin, with the pettish thoughtlessness of a sick man.

The savage started back and glared at him with ferocious anger written in every line of his dark face.

"Tush, tush, Walter! you are thoughtless," whispered his father, reprovingly. "Wandalo must not heed a sick man's idle words," he soothingly added, turning to the savage. "I am sure I, for one, can sympathize, and deeply, in the chieftain's sorrow, almost as much as if his children had perished beneath the Continental colors instead of under the invader's banner."

"And I too, Wandalo," murmured the sweet voice of Ida. The angry lines of the dusky face partially relaxed as her tender eyes rested upon it.

"The words of the good white man are gentle," he said, still with some gloom in his tone, "and the tenderness of the white Wild-Flower of the Misty Mountain descends like the dew of the morning on the suffering heart. Wandalo forgets not old friendship! He forgets not the little maid that played like a sunbeam on the green slopes in the olden time."

The attention of the party was arrested by the appearance of a horseman, approaching the mansion by the road from the east. He presently came up. He was a young American officer of rank, apparently, with much quiet dignity in his mien.

"Pardon the intrusion," he said, without alighting; "but I was very thirsty. Will you oblige me with a glass of water?"

"Certainly, my dear fellow!" said old Godfrey, in his hearty tone, at the same time pouring out a glass and reaching it to him from the porch. "And I have excellent brandy and a dozen kinds of wine at your service if you will alight and join us, sir," he continued."

"Thank you, but I can not alight; I must hasten to the village where I am waited for," said the stranger. "I will willingly join you in a friendly glass, however."

The wine was ordered and the glasses filled—not forgetting one for the silent Indian.

The horseman raised his brimming glass and bent his dark eyes upon the beautiful girl.

"If no lady was present," said he, "I should propose the health of one whom I have never seen, but whose beauty as the Heiress of Misty Mount has reached my ears in a distant home; but as I can conceive of no superior loveliness to what I behold in the lady before me, I propose—"

"The gentleman is complimentary," blushing interposed the lady. "And, although I ignore the fame which his gallantry mentions, I think he can consistently propose the toast which he previously contemplated."

"Is it possible!" exclaimed the other. "Do I then address—"

"No particular heiress, sir, but plain Ida Gwin at your service," continued the lady, with another blush.

"Now then, indeed," cried the stranger, uncovering, "do I propose, and gratefully, the Heiress of Misty Mount!" and the toast was quaffed by all, with the exception of its lovely subject.

"And will the gentleman honor us with his own name?" said the courtly host.

"Little honor will be conferred, I am afraid," replied the stranger, with a smile. "His name is Henry Cleveland, a poor colonel in the Continental army, at your service, with no possession in the world but a respectable record and the sword at his side."

"A brave man needs no more to recommend him," said Walter Gwin; "and if you are the same who participated at Monmouth—"

The colonel lifted his hat once more, and bowed, while the young man started forward and impulsively seized his hand.

"You are he, then?" he joyfully exclaimed. "Such a sword as yours is possession enough—it is an estate—a field of honor?"

The father and daughter were also glad to shake hands with a man of Cleveland's fame, and the latter felt so comfortable that he was already regretting the duties which must render his halt of short duration.

"Now, let *me* propose a toast," cried old Godfrey, brimming the glasses again as he spoke. "Here is to George Washington and the Continental armies, and confusion to their foes, be they British or Tories."

"With all my heart!" cried the horseman, emptying his glass with gusto, as did Ida and her brother.

But a sudden shade of anger darted over the pale cheek of the latter.

"Our toast is distasteful to Wandalo, it seems. Why does the chieftain spill his wine upon the grass?" he exclaimed, looking angrily and distrustfully at the savage, who, at the mention of the last toast, had scornfully flung his wine away.

"The wine is too red for Wandalo," was the scornful reply. "The life-blood of his children is dark in the cup. The Thunder-Scorner cannot drink to the destroyers of his race."

The fierce fit was upon him again. Seizing his rifle, he drew his blanket closer around him, and strode away.

"He speaks excellent English for a savage," observed Cleveland. "Is he trustworthy?"

"Father thinks so," said the young captain, dubiously.

"I consider Wandalo perfectly trustworthy," said Mr. Gwin. "I have known him now for twenty years. His tribe and he occupied the plains and ranges immediately behind Misty Mountain, when I first settled here; and, although the rest of his tribe have long since gone further west, Wandalo haunts the old scenes like a phantom of loneliness. Mutual favors have passed between us frequently. He saved my life once at the upper cataract of the Catawba, and, most probably, the old friendship is his strongest motive for lingering about the valley. He has never served the Tories, though all his kindred have perished in their cause; on the contrary, he has rendered signal service to General Morgan in the skirmish of last spring, at the middle ford of Broad river. What you have just witnessed was merely a momentary fit of gloom at the recollection of his slaughtered sons."

"I am afraid it means more than that," said Walter.

"Pardon me if I venture to agree with your son," said Cleaveland, turning to Mr. Gwin. "I have been much with the Indians, and do not speak in ignorance of their character when I say that vengeance is their ruling passion, before which all others, good or evil, sink into insignificance. The savage casts aside all friendships in the heat of his vendetta, as the serpent casts his skin. His monomania is revenge. I should be guarded and watchful of this Wandalo. He may be dangerous and false as—"

"As a Tory," interrupted Walter, laughing.

"That will do," said the colonel, with a smile. "And now, in return for my diagnosis of the red-skin, what do you make of the *genus* Tory, captain?"

"Well, let me see. Really—it is a beast of the masculine gender exclusively—apiteful in the extreme—vicious—dangerous—there! I give up the subject, as beyond my comprehension."

"Perhaps Colonel Cleaveland can give a better definition," suggested Ida, much amused at her brother's failure.

"I should say," was the reply, "that a Tory is one who has his head in England and his body in America, and should, therefore, have his neck stretched. Good-by!" And, wheeling his steed abruptly, he spurred away in the midst of the general laugh at his blunt definition.

"Come again," cried old Godfrey, after the retreating horseman, and Ida could not forbear waving her handkerchief.

The officer turned, took off his hat, bowed thankfully, and continued his course. They watched him galloping down the long road till he was lost in the dwindling distance.

"A handsome fellow," observed the old gentleman.

"So say I," said Walter. "What think you, Ida? Bless me, how you are blushing."

The lady turned away her head, for she felt the warm blood tingling her cheek.

"Don't be ashamed, my little heiress," continued her brother, merrily. "The subject of your thoughts is well worthy—"

"What do you know of the subject of my thoughts, you saucy fellow?" retorted his sister, with a playfully offended air. "I would also have you know, sir, that I *am not* an heiress, as if the whole of Misty Mount were one day to be mine, when *papa* is so hale and strong, and when a

great fellow like you is to come in for the lion's share."

"Don't be alarmed, pet," said her brother, laughing. "I may not be in the way so long as you think. A soldier's lease of life is an uncertain one."

These words had barely left the young man's lips when the sharp, though distant report of a rifle was heard. The captain sprang from his seat very quickly, but immediately sunk down on the floor of the porch.

"What is the matter, man?" exclaimed the old man, in amaze.

There was no answer but a groan.

"My God!" gasped Ida, "he is wounded—Walter is wounded!"

She threw herself on her knees at his side, in an agony of grief; while, for a brief instant, the old man did not move. The whole thing had happened so quickly, suddenly, that his mind was momentarily paralyzed. But the next instant he was kneeling by his prostrate son.

"Walter, Walter! It can not be! Look up, my boy, look up to your father!"

The young man opened his eyes languidly. A faint smile brightened over his lips for a second or two; then his head sunk back, his eyes closed again, his jaw fell—and Ida Gwin was indeed an heiress—the sole heiress of the princely mansion and the broad, rich acres of Misty Mount. The dead man's hand, which had been nervously pressed to his heart, slipped loosely away as the head dropped back, and his white shirt and vest immediately began to crimson with the oozing blood beneath. The old man tore the bosom bare, and there was the wound—the little, round, deadly hole of the rifle-bullet, straight through the center of the now motionless heart.

It would be idle to attempt to portray, in fitting language, the anguish that fell upon the household at this sudden and terrible stroke. Therefore, let us draw the veil over their sacred grief.

The news of this cowardly murder spread consternation and sorrow through the entire valley, for the victim was universally beloved. No effort was spared to bring the unknown assassin to justice; but without avail. The doer of the deed was not found. Not even the smoke of the deadly rifle had been seen. Only its distant report had been heard—from what direction none could remember. And the mourning relatives and their friends were left in a cloud of doubt

as well as misery. All the slaves of the estate were closely examined, without eliciting any thing of importance; and the shrewdness of the old chieftain, Wandalo, was brought into requisition, with no better success. He searched all the adjoining thickets thoroughly, and finally gave it up as a hopeless quest.

CHAPTER III.

New Actors on the Scene.

GATEKEEPER. See, fellow, my lord knits his brows; and now he chuckles like a cackling hen. Depend on't, that mother wit of his has had another egg.

BUTLER. Ay, and there'll be deviltry hatching soon.
OLD PLAY.

ON that same dark day, as the twilight deepened over the valley, a solitary figure was standing motionless within a little arbor which stood on the lawn, in front of old Jacob Gleason's dwelling, scarcely a mile from Misty Mount. It was the bent figure of a gloomy old man. He seemed to be lost in thought as he gazed out of the arbor toward the mansion. His reflections must have been any thing but pleasant. The house was large and of some elegance of style, but sadly out of repair. Indeed, every thing about the place gave token of stinginess or poverty in the possessor. The wooden portico, in front, was much decayed; some of the upper windows were broken, and the once trim garden was sadly overgrown with weeds. But it was not poverty that kept the place in this dismal condition.

A light step on the lawn aroused him, and he looked up expectantly. It was only, however, the form of his mulatto housekeeper who approached, and he was disappointed.

"What do you want, Judith?" he inquired, pettishly.

"My master," was the reply.

There was something remarkable in the appearance of this slave-woman. Her complexion was very light—almost white—and her features had some remnants of beauty in their passionate lines. She was not young—forty or thereabouts—but her long, straight hair was of raven blackness; her large, dark eyes were intensely bright—almost feverishly so. The air of this woman was not that of a slave—hardly that of a servant.

"What do you want?" again asked the master.

"I bear news," said the slave-woman. "Walter Gwin was shot to death an hour ago, by a concealed assassin."

"Shot? and killed? Who could have done the horrid deed?"

"Ay, who *could* have done it?" The woman stood before him with folded arms, eyeing the old man with a kind of ferocity which expressed mingled pleasure and consciousness of the possession of a secret.

"What do you mean?" instinctively asked the now trembling master.

"I mean that what you have wished for is accomplished—that no second heir to the manor now stands in the way of your schemes!" This was uttered in a tone of defiance and contempt, which, had Jacob Gleason been a guiltless man, would have caused him to strike the presumptuous slave to the earth. As it was, he could only mutter a protest against the mulatto's assumption.

"Judith!"

The slave smiled in her consciousness of power, and gazed upon him with her great, passionate eyes, as if the moment were one of triumph. "Which one is the slave?" seemed to be the words ready formed upon her tongue.

Approaching footsteps put a stop to further recrimination.

"Is that the Indian's tread?" asked Gleason, bending his ear to listen.

"No; the footstep of the Indian is noiseless by night. This is the step of a moody man."

"Whose?"

"Your son's."

As she spoke, the tall form of Heartstead Gleason stood in the door of the arbor. He was haggard and travel-worn, and looked like a haunted man. Without saying a word, but throwing a scowl at Judith, he took the old man by the arm and proceeded up the lawn with him to the house.

Judith was left alone. She watched the departing twain through the gathering gloom, and then came out of the arbor, and sat down on a little bench outside. There she remained a long time. The night grew pitchy dark without her noticing it; then the rising moon glimmered like an uplifted shield above the tree-tops, and the balmy luster played upon her face, but she did not observe its beauty. At length a leaf rustled behind her, and she started. The dusky

form of Wandalo glided into the moonlight. His eyes rested upon her with sorrowful tenderness.

"Why does the wild Passion-Flower droop?" said Wandalo. "Are the dews of memory heavy on her soul?"

The woman's mood was one on which the sad tones of the savage fell soothingly.

"Yes, my friend," she replied; "but I am always thus. And how is it with the Thunder-Mocker? He is also pensive. He fings about the mountain which his tribe have deserted, like a lonely waterfall whose sister torrents have ceased to flow."

"Yes," was the mournful reply. "The white man's foot may invade the old dingles, and the red-men may drift to the westward like the waving fogs in the morning sun, but Wandalo still roams like a dream the old hunting-grounds. And his spirit shall linger here also. While the eagles shriek and soar above the cliffs—while the deer and the bear and the wolf are abroad, and while the Catawba flows to the sea, the soul of Wandalo shall cling to his Misty Mountain."

He relapsed into silence, and, sitting down by her side, took her hand in his, without resistance, for Wandalo and Judith were old friends.

It is difficult to imagine a genuine love as existing in the breast of a male aborigine, his habits are so rude—his nature is so fierce. But, if ever man loved woman fervently, devotedly, this lonely Indian, Wandalo, loved the slave-woman, Judith. He had a proud, high tone of feeling in his rude breast, and he knew the woman perfectly for what she was—a slave. Still he would have made her his bride with utter rapture; he would have borne her to his lonely cabin on the mountain, and made her his queen—his idol. Wandalo was a young brave, full of the ardor and vigor of the savage when the blood is fresh in the veins, at the time when Jacob Gleason came to the neighborhood of the Mountain from the coast, bringing with him, among other slaves, the beautiful mulatto, who was then in the ripe, voluptuous splendor of tropic womanhood. There were dark threads in the rumor of her history. That which gained the most credence was that she was natural sister of Godfrey Gwin, the wealthy possessor of Misty Mount. Judith's mother, Elise, a slave-woman of much beauty and some accomplishments, had be-

longed to Sir Henry Gwin, the father of old Godfrey, many years before the opening of our story. Elise was wedded to a slave, also a mulatto, a house-servant at the mansion, but suffered such persecution at the hands of her mistress, the baronet's wife, that she became partially deranged. The birth of Judith, and the child's exceeding beauty, only added to the poor mother's calamities. One morning early she was discovered dead in her bed, having taken poison. Judith grew up, as tenderly cared for as it was possible by Sir Henry, but hated by the mistress, for the child was a pure quadroon in complexion, and intelligent as the most favored child of Saxon blood. The kindness of Sir Henry toward her seemed to confirm the generally received opinion of his close relationship, and she passed for one of his own blood. That the baronet's other children imbibed much of their mother's hate toward the quadroon was but natural, and the boys, Rupert and Godfrey, were not naturally calculated to brook her presence when it could be dispensed with. The opportunity of placing her where, in a slave community, such are ever *legally* placed—in a slave's position and estate—was not wanting, for, upon Sir Henry's death, Judith fell by law among the "assets" of his estate, and was disposed of as one of his horses would have been. Her purchaser was Jacob Gleason. That this man had a *design* in her purchase will appear in the course of the narrative.

Judith had in her nature all the elements of happiness. She was very beautiful, very gleesome, very willing to love and be loved; but, all this power to be happy was thrust back upon her heart like a threat, and when she was converted into a slave, in fact, by executor's sale, her passionate soul lost its love, its purity, its hopes, and she became changed to a creature whose ceaseless cry was for vengeance, not only against those who had abased her, but against society itself, which looked on and indorsed the hideous wrongs heaped upon her existence. From her heart went forth all pity, all goodness, as somber mourners from a house of death; in their stead came the passions and hates which render human nature fearful in its worst manifestations.

As the property of Gleason, the beautiful girl was received in his family with the distrust and jealousy which Southern women always bestowed upon household slaves of more than ordinary attractions. But she

bore ill-usage patiently although her fierce nature prompted her many a time to retaliation which would have ended in tragedy. Her heart was set upon vengeance; to attain her wish she could bear all things—ill-usage, slander, suffering of body and spirit. Vengeance against the house which had destroyed her happiness, her faith in Heaven, her hopes of future life! Poor girl. She did not know that her purchaser read her vows in her very eyes—that he had penetrated the disguise in which she had clothed her secret purpose. He knew her well, and he had purchased her to let her work out that purpose since it harmonized well with the designs which long had been forming in his own brain toward the Gwin family and property.

All the years of her girlhood were spent in the slave's estate, and yet the fortunate moment for inflicting humiliation, for bringing sorrow into the Gwin household, did not arrive.

Mulattoes at that time were not frequently met with, at least in the colonies of North America. The institution of African slavery was then too young to have produced, in any considerable numbers those living evidences of one of its principal and intrinsic evils. But, as now, the mulatto women were sometimes of rare beauty; and, owing to the paucity of the class, they were the more noticeable.

Her chattelhood was comparatively easy. Stricken with remorse, her father and master hardly treated her as a servant. He silently endured the reproach of her existence. She was brought up with his children, ate with them, lived with them, was educated with them. But these children, Rupert and Godfrey, shrunk from their little slave-sister as a disgrace to their dead mother's memory, although there was some pity in Godfrey's heart. As for the unfortunate girl, her springing form unfolded with all the beauty of her mother. Passionate, fierce, vindictive, terrible, yet full of self-control, patient, vigilant, subtle-brained, this being, as she developed into the first blush of glorious womanhood, resembled, in a moral sense, a beautiful leopard: her footstep was as flowing, as velvety; her customary mien was as glossy and as sleek; her heart was as loving and as treacherous—one to be tamed, perhaps, but never trusted. Within the bosom of such a being how must have rankled the dark story of her mother's misery and her own wrongs! It could not be concealed

from her. She gathered the narrative while yet a child; and a carefully-nursed vengeance expanded in her bosom in pace with its budding charms. At the age of eighteen, the slave-girl was a wonderful creature. Her charms were brilliant but not tender; they were rather the dark, voluptuous belongings of the fallen angel. She was well read, well educated. The guitar was a tuneful slave to her passionate hand; she could sweep the harp like a sibyl of old; and her voice was the mistress of song. About this time her master and father died—suddenly and unprepared. Immediately there was a change in her estate. From the willful mistress of the household, by the force of law, she fell to the condition of the slave. The brothers would brook her at their side no longer. And the oldest, Rupert, persecuted her as his father had persecuted her mother. But in this case the fall was not that of the stricken deer, but the wounded tiger. A week later and her persecutor was sent to another world through the medium of poison. Godfrey also fell ill, but was restored in time. Horror possessed the unhappy household. The body of the old man was unearthed; and it was found that he also had perished by poison. The slave-girl was suspected and arrested; but nothing could be proved, and the law relinquished its hesitating grasp. And about this time a gloomy man became spell-bound by the beauty of Judith, during a journey from his Virginia home. She easily induced him to buy her—Godfrey being only too glad to be rid of her presence. Something of the latter's subsequent history we already know, as the acquirer and present possessor of Misty Mount. The new owner of Judith was Jacob Gleason. He was wealthy, and hated the race of Gwin with a secret and serpent-like malignity; and this was enough for Judith, who might use him for the tool of her vengeance. But he was first to be made a perfect tool; and he had a family—a wife and two young sons, and a maiden sister. The wicked Gleason had long grown cold to the former, who was wealthy in her own right, as was the sister also. And these women were not long in crossing the path of Judith. The wife of Gleason was a proud English dame, who conceived an instant hatred for the new slave, whose miraculous beauty inflamed her jealousy to a white heat.

Gleason had no peace for the recrimination which followed, and Judith was

unmercifully persecuted. The latter bore it meekly for a while. But one day, the master being from home, the beautiful slave was seized by the order of her mistress, and firmly bound in a deep, dungeon-like cellar beneath the house. Here, alone, with a torch in one hand and a many-thonged whip in the other, the lady, insane through jealousy, inflicted a terrible punishment upon the person of the slave. The lash was applied till the wearied hand of the torturer could lift it no longer; and then the red tongue of the torch was applied, with the skill of a fiend's malignity, so as not to mar so much as to scorch, till malice itself was sated, and the cup of vengeance dry to the dregs. But there was no need to have confined the victim in a shriek-stifling dungeon to accomplish this; the partition that separated her from the listening world might have been of pasteboard for aught that the world would have known of the deed enacting within. For not a sound—not a murmur escaped the suffering victim on that rack of pain. She set her lips, without a tear. At length, the tormentress, fearing her husband's return, released and revived her victim. To her astonishment, the heroic Judith did not rush to her master and display her scars to excite his pity and fury. She moved about the house as before, without a murmur, almost without a twinge of the lip. "No matter," thought the baffled tormentress, with an inward smile, "I can wait till another time. I can flog her to the quick, if I bide my time." But human calculations are never certain. That evening the lady fell sick. And Judith waited upon and nursed her mistress, in spite of the protestations of the latter, with an assiduity which was positively filial. Slowly the patient grew worse. Her case was beyond the doctor's comprehension. Her teeth were gradually loosened; her hair fell out; her skin shrunk to parchment; and, after many days of indescribable anguish, she died. Scarcely a year elapsed before the maiden sister of Gleason was seized with the same horrible disease, but in a swifter form. She also perished; and Judith had the actual, as she had long had the virtual, control of Jacob Gleason's household. The latter—his fortunes well-nigh trebled by these sudden deaths—had, shortly after, emigrated to the vicinity of Misty Mount, where we now find him. The tribe to which Wandalo belonged was then quite numerous in the mountains. The sight of

the lovely quadron had sufficed to generate an ineffaceable impression in the heart of the youthful warrior. Perhaps this passion was requited; but Judith had clung to the master with whose fate she felt her own to be inextricably blended; although the attachment thus formed between her and her Indian lover was never obliterated. Here, indeed, was the secret loadstone which held the warrior to the old scenes which his tribe had long deserted.

So now we see them together, as the night falls around them, like the many years that have dropped upon their hearts since the hot blood was coursing in their veins. And Judith does not take her hand from the pensive savage. There is something so mournful and tender between these two forlorn wild beings, that each experiences the personal influence of the other as a feeling balmy and grateful. Well may it be thus with these two hearts, so fierce and lonely, each stained with crimes which the blind, passionate temperament of the possessor justifies as inevitable; and each yearning with that hungry longing which descends upon the hopeless of soul.

At length, Judith broke the long silence:

"Has the dark deed of an hour ago come yet to the chieftain's knowledge?" she asked.

"Yes, my sweet Flower. And the doer, whoever he be, hath one crime the more to lay like a burden at the foot of the Great Spirit's throne."

"And I one for the less," said the quadron, moodily. "There are but two left now, Wandalo. My vengeance is almost complete."

"And yet the white Lily of the Valley, at the white chief's mansion on the Mountain side, will droop in the blight that snatched her brother bloom," said the savage, pityingly.

"Let her droop!" was the fierce rejoinder; and Judith snatched her hand from the Indian's hold. "The Thunder-Scorner is no friend of the Passion-Flower, if he would water the Lily with a pitying tear!"

"The Great Spirit gave the chieftain a tender heart," was the low reply. "Wandalo can not forget the bright Sunbeam with the golden hair that played on the slopes when the valley was young and the pale-faces were few; how shall he forget the glorious pure Lily that now droops at her brother's grave?"

"It must be otherwise!" said the quadron,

in a voice almost inaudible with passion. "Has thy love for the Passion-Flower grown cold, Wandalo?"

The chieftain flung himself at her feet.

"The love of Wandalo has never cooled," he cried. "Oh, it is not too late! Be mine, be mine, dark Blossom of the glens. We will leave these scheming white men to themselves, and the wild, free mountains shall be our home. The bloom of our youth is passing away, but it were sweet to wither in each other's arms. Be my bride, dark Flower of my thoughts! Or name a test of Wandalo's love. What shall he do to gain the high ledge whereon thou growest so darkly bright? Be mine, be mine!"

This outpouring of the Indian's love had gushed like a geyser through the frost of his usually imperturbable mien. Judith rose to her feet and looked down upon him, with folded arms; and there was something tender and profound in her stern, dark gaze.

"Listen, Wandalo," said she, in low, trembling tones. "This is not the only time I have seen you at my feet. My answer has hitherto been adverse to thy suit. The time has come when it may be otherwise. I bid thee hope."

The Indian sprang to his feet with a joyful cry; but she motioned him back.

"Not so fast!" she continued, with a somber smile. "There is a condition. The chieftain bids me to test his love; and it shall be so. But he must toil indeed, if he would gain the ledge whereon I bloom."

"Let the Passion-Flower but breathe her terms," was the reply.

"My terms are these," cried Judith: "the chieftain must crush all pity from his heart. Thou knowest the dark tale of my early life; thou knowest my vengeance is not complete. The owner of Misty Mount and his daughter are the only two left in my path to triumph. Have I Wandalo's arm to do my bidding?"

The Indian hung his head and answered remonstratingly:

"But why should the vengeance of the dark beauty extend so far? The pale-face of the grand mansion was not her wronger; it was his brother, who is already in the tomb."

"My hatred extends not only to his family but to his race," was the stern reply.

"Alas! and must the Lily, Ida, also perish?"

"Ay, and more than perish!"

The Indian looked up inquiringly.

"She must perish two-fold," was the dark reply.

"How may that be, my dark beauty? One can not die but once."

"A woman can!" exclaimed the quaderoon. "First in her happiness; then in her life—the lesser death."

"The Gloomy Blossom can not mean—"

"Ay!" was the fierce anticipation of his horrified query. "The lady Ida shall perish first as *I* perished. *I* was as fresh, as glad, as bright as she; what am I now? The fiend thou seest. Oh, she shall also drink the cup of misery—to the dregs—to the dregs!" she repeated, vehemently, pacing to and fro, and rubbing her hands feverishly. "Oh, she shall also feel the iron in her soul! She shall become the wife of one she hates! The backward look shall be a glance of horror to her heart! She shall behold the barrier between her and her olden happiness as a heaven-reaching, star-blotting wall of adamant, as *I* beheld it. Oh, she shall writhe—writhe—writhe! Ha! does the chieftain relent his love? Does he fear to trample on his pity?"

There was no reply. A fearful contest was raging in Wandalo's bosom—a war of good and evil, in which the one or the other must be exterminated. He trembled violently as his forehead sunk below her burning gaze.

"Determine quickly!" cried the beautiful fiend. "My love or my hatred; choose! I see. Thy cowardly pity is triumphant. Farewell!"

She turned to go; but the victory was her's and Satan's; the chieftain raised his stormy face, staggered an instant as in perplexity, and then sprang forward, and clasped her in his arms.

"Thou art mine! thou art mine! Oh, wild, fierce spirit!" he cried. "Speak, and thy word is law to the Thunder-Mocker. Let the pale-face perish, and the Lily wither in the soil; thou art the only bloom for me!"

Judith returned his embrace with an eager joy; and, for the first time, their lips met in a burning kiss, like the sealing of a frightful bond.

"Yes, I am thine forever, Wandalo!" murmured she; "and, in our own good time, we will seek the distant mountains for a home!"

"What are the plans of the Passion-Flower?"

"They are few and simple. Heartstead

Gleason is the tool we must use. He loves the girl; but he is naturally wicked, and the knowledge that she loves him not has made him moody and desperate. She shall be his wife by force. Leave me to deal with him. The time is not quite ripe. But be thou ready when the moment comes; and, in the mean time, loiter around the Gwins as of old, and learn what thou canst. I shall await thee here, at this hour, every night, until the mine is sprung. Farewell! I must now depart."

But the chieftain clasped her once again before she went; when the quadroon moved hastily up the lawn. The savage watched her figure till it was lost in the trees; and, even then, he still stood motionless for many moments, as if buried in profound meditation.

Who may say what passed in that dusky bosom during those somber moments? Was the contest for the sovereignty of his soul resumed? or had the victory been decisive and absolute? Did his thoughts dance backward through the years again to the little bright-haired Ida whose innocence and purity had fanned the angel flame within his breast? or did he dwell passionately on the fierce, lustrous being whose burning kiss yet lingered on his lips, like the taste of an elixir of evil? We can not tell. But, whatever his thoughts, his brow was knitted into iron lines; and he seemed to have grown older—much older. Presently he drew his blanket around him, and glided away into the gloom with a noiseless step.

CHAPTER IV.

Father and Son.

"Oh woe is it, when mortal man
For man's destruction spreads the snare!
The vengeance, which with time began,
Shall overtake him here or there."

WHEN Heartstead Gleason had led his father into a small chamber, which appeared like a study, in an upper story of the dismal mansion, and had locked the door carefully, he threw himself at full length on a lounge, while his father drew up a chair, first, however, lighting a rusty iron lamp, from which a feeble glimmer was emitted.

"What is your object in returning home?" asked the old man. "Do you not know your peril?"

"Yes, and I scorn it," was the gloomy reply.

If affection existed between them, it must

have been a singular attachment. Father and son, long separated from each other; and yet no word of greeting passed between them, hardly a kind glance even.

"You have heard the news?" inquired Heartstead.

"Yes—yes!" replied the old man, pettishly, thinking of the death of the younger Gwin. "Good enough news, I am sure; but—"

"Good news!" exclaimed the other, with a shocked expression. "Well, it may seem so to you; but, as for me, the ties of blood are still strong."

"Pshaw! what ties of blood are you speaking of?"

"Thought you had heard the news!"

"What news?"

"That brother Charles is no more."

The sudden anguish that wreathed the old man's wrinkled face would have been a glad study for Parrhasius.

"Charlie—my little Charlie dead!" he murmured, in dismay. He bowed his face in his hands, and humanity vindicated her sway in a flood of tears. He rocked himself to and fro dismally for a few moments before he regained his composure.

"He died bravely, and for the king," said Heartstead.

"When—how?"

"Yesterday—where the upper road strikes into the mountains. Colonel Ferguson sent a dozen of us up to intercept a certain Colonel Cleaveland, who was riding alone and bearing dispatches from the north. Curse him! He burst through our ambush, knocked down three or four of us, and escaped; not, however, without leaving a pistol-bullet in poor Charlie's head."

"Cleaveland—Cleaveland! I know the name—a Northern rough-rider, and a villainous Rebel. Why, he passed through the valley this afternoon, and stopped at Misty Mount, on his way to Valleyton."

"Then he saw Ida?"

"Very probably; but she has something else to think of than a handsome colonel. Of course you've heard of Walter Gwin's death?"

"No. You astonish me!"

"It is true. Cleaveland had not been gone ten minutes before the young viper was shot dead by some one concealed in a thicket close at hand."

"A dastard shot!"

"But say a lucky one, also. Do you not see—"

"I see but one thing, and that is my old schoolmate weltering in his blood. We were once good friends. God rest him! He was a gallant fellow!" A genuine emotion worked in the young Tory's face, and his voice was broken as he paid this tribute to his playmate's memory.

"Nonsense!" said the sterner father. "Do you not see that Ida becomes sole heiress of Misty Mount?"

"Much good it will do me—a man whom she hates!" was the bitter rejoinder.

The old man bit his lips. At length he said with a sneer:

"Certainly the good accruing to you therefrom will not be great, if you give it up like a coward."

"Give what up?"

"Your suit for the heiress of Misty Mount."

"Is it not hopeless?" moaned Heartstead, despairingly.

"Yes, for a hopeless man. Be of good heart—be resolved, and she shall yet be yours."

"How?"

"By any means—by force, if necessary. Cornwallis is advancing—the rebels flying. You can raise a dozen friends, even here, in the valley, to carry off the beauty."

"That would be gaining her love with a vengeance."

"Pshaw! Think of the property!"

"Damn the property!" cried the young man, fiercely, his dark features lighting up with scorn. "You may have the property; I want the heart!"

"Ha! ha! ha!" laughed a strange laugh from the passage-way outside the bolted door; "Ha! ha! ha! *And what if she loves another*, my brave Tory!"

"It's that infernal jade, Judith!" cried the young man, rushing to the door with ungovernable fury; but before he could open it the laugh was heard running away through the distant passages.

"Don't put yourself out of humor for the quadroneer," said the old man, soothingly. "Besides, her suggestion is worth considering."

He said no more, for he saw that Judith's taunt had set the young man thinking; and he resolved to let the venom have time to work.

In truth, a black, anxious look rested upon the handsome but sinister features of Heartstead Gleason, as he paced the room, with folded arms, and his chin upon his

breast. That startling sentence, "*And what if she loves another!*" rung in his ears with fearful emphasis. The fiend was at work in his breast. Presently his brow cleared slightly.

"It is impossible!" he said. "I know the valley by heart; and there is not a man in it for whom she cares a straw."

"Ha! ha! ha!" laughed that wild laugh again, from the passage without. "But *Cleveland*, Colonel *Cleveland!*"

"Hag! slave! but this time you shall not escape me!" roared Heartstead, tearing open the door, and springing into the hall.

No one was to be seen. The voice might as well have been bodiless, for aught he could discern.

"Pshaw! be calm!" said the father's soothing voice, once more, as the other closed and locked the door.

Then the old man was again quiet; for there was new venom to be left to work its way, as the young man resumed his moody, arm-folded pacing, with that last sentence—"But *Cleveland*, Colonel *Cleveland!*"—hissing through his brain like the tongue of an angry cobra. Presently he paused at the open window, and looked out into the night.

"Why, what is this?" he exclaimed; "what a sudden storm! The earth is as black as Erebus!"

The old man also approached the window and glanced out.

"Come, my son, you had better get some sleep," said he. "You are anxious and worn out." So saying, he took the lamp and led Heartstead away to his chamber.

Poor fellow! The moon was beaming brightly and peacefully over the whole landscape. The only storm was that which raged within his own bosom and brain.

CHAPTER V.

Hope and Despair.

I love thee, lady! My bosom bounds beneath thy
smile
 As doth the sea unto the moon his mighty mistress!
 Looking up to her, and murmuring—
 "Lovely, lovely, lovely! Lady of the Heavens!"
 FRASER

Two weeks had passed at Misty Mount since the lamentable incident with which our second chapter closed; and Colonel Cleveland had been a frequent visitor at the mansion. Valleyton, where he was posted, was so very near; and then the

afflicted ones were fond of his society, and the genuine zeal with which he had instituted search for Walter's murderer had elevated him even more in their esteem. Two weeks had passed, and the young captain was at rest beneath the turf of the pleasant valley; but though that subdued and silent air which fills the heavens upon the taking away of a beloved and cherished form still pervaded the atmosphere of the manor-house and its surroundings, the soothing solace of time was beginning to heal the wounds of sorrowing hearts. Cleaveland had been so good and kind, he was so courtly and refined in his manners and feelings, that it was little to be wondered at that those two weeks of sorrow and sympathy had drawn him closer into the lonely household. The old man had come to love him dearly; and Ida—what can we say but that she too loved the brave soldier and true friend?

Cleaveland was an excellent reader; and the shelves of the Gwin library were loaded with the lore and poesy of the not dead past. Nothing was more delightful than to hear his deep voice on the pensive rhapsodies of Dante, the balmy love-wails of Petrarch, the sweet strains of Spenser, or the grand, high imagery of Milton's muse. Besides, he was a musician. What could be more delightful and consoling than the harmonies of the guitar to those whose souls were pining for peace. In a hundred ways, he exercised his ingenuity and talents to bring back the old happiness to Misty Mount. And, though the new grave on the hill, the empty chair at the table, and the well-known sword that hung so brightly and lonesomely over the portrait of its former owner, on the drawing-room wall—though these were ineffaceable mementoes of the "gone, forever gone," the efforts of the handsome officer were not wholly without success; and every day he was looked for with increased pleasure. It was such a short distance to the camp at Valleyton—barely a ten minutes' gallop—that there was no excuse for his not riding over to the mansion every day. And the lovely Ida began to experience a thread of tenderness in this gratification which she would have been extremely unwilling to confess. Jenny, her maid, a bright black girl, saw the light impression which was gradually deepening in her mistress' feelings, and was not slow to talk in favor of the colonel's appearance.

"La, Missus," said she, one day while doing up the fair tresses of her mistress, "la, but dat Cunnel Cleavelan', if he isn't de sweetest gemmen I ever set eyes on. Twice as handsome as any one in de valley, an' almost as magnificent as poor Massa Wally was. An' oh, what a beautiful miniature dat is what he carries roun' his neck!"

"Miniature!"

"La, Miss, how you start! You nearly drewed your back hair out by de roots. Oh, my! how many dimons and camphires and ametwists dere is strung roun' dat sweet lady's picture!"

"Lady's picture!"

"Yes. But la, Miss Ida, how pale you've growed all on a sudden! Wait till I get your smellin' bottle."

"Nonsense, you silly thing! Go on with my hair. Every one has a right to wear a lady's miniature, if one chooses."

"Yes, Missus; but every one isn't so lucky as to hab one strung all roun' wid dimons, camphires—"

"Nonsense, I say! You say it was a lady's face?"

"Yes, Miss; and *sich* a face! I declar' I neber see'd de like. *Sich* eyes! *sich* hair! *sich* lips! an' oh golly! *sich* a nose. Gorra Massa! it looked jis' like—jis' like—jis' like pop-corn."

"How could it look like that, you silly thing?" cried Ida, laughing in spite of herself.

"I mean it look jis' like dat are tastes, you know."

"In the first place, how did you happen to see this miniature?" continued Ida.

"La, Miss, dat night when it blowed an' rained so and Massa made de cunnel stop all night, I see'd him fastenin' of it roun' his neck when I fetched de shavin' water up to him in de mornin'. Oh, golly! *sich* a face!"

"There, that will do, Jenny."

But, nevertheless, do what she would, Ida could not drive Colonel Cleaveland's miniature from her mind. She found herself imagining its appearance with a painful curiosity. It could not be the picture of a wife. She had heard the colonel mention that he was a bachelor. It must be of a sweetheart. And yet might it not be a cousin, an aunt, a friend? It is seldom that young men burden their hearts with the gem-encircled portraits of cousins, aunts, or female friends. In fact, whose *could* it be. "Well," thought Ida, laughing to

herself, "it is not a particle of difference whose it is." "But," sighed Ida's heart, with a voice so low that she could not hear it herself, "but, it is very provoking that Colonel Cleaveland should wear the miniature of a beautiful lady in his breast."

The colonel himself was none the less welcome at Misty Mount; nor the less agreeable and fascinating.

One sunny afternoon, at about the close of this eventful fortnight, Ida put on her hat, and sauntered down the bank of the river alone. She had wandered several furlongs from the house before she was aware of it; but, as she found herself approaching a cool clump of maples, in which she remembered there was a little retreat her father had made many years ago, she went on, intending to rest herself there before returning.

As she entered the wood, a short distance from the road, and between the road and the river, she was surprised, almost startled, to perceive that Wandalo was walking by her side. So stealthy was the tread of the Indian, that his step was noiseless on the sward.

"How you startled me, Wandalo!" she exclaimed, but smiling forgiveness upon him. "Great Heaven! what is the matter?"

The chieftain had merely raised his head, without answering, and this last exclamation was caused by the woeful change that had been wrought in his dark face since she had last seen him. A hundred wrinkles seemed to have been added. Gaunt, sallow and emaciated, and hesitating in his manner, he no longer seemed the sturdy and confident savage of old.

"Has Wandalo been sick?" she asked, kindly taking his hand.

He laid his hand upon his heart, and sighed deeply.

"A little further on and the sweet Flower will find a pleasanter shade than this," he said, as they drew near the retreat, but not making any reply to her previous question.

"Thank you; then I will go on to find it," she replied. "Will not the chieftain accompany his little Flower? No? Well, good-by, then."

She touched his hand again, and passed on, as he answered her invitation with a gloomy shake of the head. The Indian looked after her with a strange earnestness and hesitation, as her lithe figure glided into the denser thicket. Once he sprung forward as if to bring her back; his lips

swelled as if with a pent-up cry. But he suppressed his intention, whatever it was, stamped angrily on the ground, and turned swiftly away in another direction.

Expecting to find the cool retreat awaiting her, and wondering at the great change which had come over Wandalo, Ida continued her way, but was alarmed to find the thicket grow denser at every step, although it could not have been far from the broad road that ran down to the village. Thinking that she must have mistaken the Indian's directions, and considerably vexed, she at length turned to retrace her steps.

But Heartstead Gleason stood in her pathway, with folded arms.

"Mr. Gleason!"

"Ida!"

"It is not right for you to startle me in this way, sir," she said, with a pout on her lip. "Nor is it proper for you to call me by my first name, sir."

"I call you by the name which is the sweetest sound on earth, or, I believe, in heaven, *Ida*," said the youth, and with a mournful earnestness that filled her breast with pity. "I saw you enter here, *Ida*. I must speak with you; so I followed."

"I was not aware that you were at home," she said. "Is there not danger in your presence in the valley?"

"Not more danger than I would confront a thousand times to accomplish that which brought me hither. Am I not sadly changed since you saw me last?"

"Greatly," she said, gazing with profound pity into the young man's face, with its handsome, but attenuated features, and too-lustrous eyes. "You must have been ill," she added.

"Yes, I have had sickness and sorrow enough, *Ida*. My brother is slain, and I am quite friendless."

"What, Charlie? Charlie slain? He was a gay, happy spirit. We grow accustomed to death in time of war; but I could have better spared a closer intimate than my old playfellow. Ah, I can sympathize with you deeply, as you must know!"

"Yes, *Ida*, I heard of your gallant brother's death with sincere sorrow. We have both had our sorrows. But it was neither grief nor sorrow for the dead that harrowed my frame and emaciated my face as you see them. It was my hopeless love for you, *Ida*—my unrequited but eternal passion."

"If you continue in this vein, sir, I shall

be very much offended," she replied, looking quite pale.

"Oh, Ida, hear me but for a moment! Let me—"

"No, sir, I will not hear you!" she exclaimed, with spirit. "It is to your shame that you thus persecute me. Allow me to go out of the thicket, sir."

He raised his eyes and glanced at her with the bold calmness of despair, but continued immovable in the narrow path.

"Allow me to pass, sir!" she exclaimed, indignantly.

"Will you not hear me first?" he asked, with dreadful calmness.

"No."

"You must!"

"Sir—"

A sudden gust of passion seized the young man, and bore him along impetuously.

"Oh, Ida! Ida!" he burst forth, flinging himself on his knees at her feet, "hear me—hear me, or I die! I am friendless on the wide, bleak earth. My father is a sordid miser; my bright, gay brother is blotted from the living world; I am a despised and hunted man—the partisan of a sinking cause. I am friendless! friendless! friendless!"

His words were almost smothered in sobs. Ida's resentment vanished immediately. She was grieved and shocked.

"You shall not be friendless. I will be your friend, Heartstead," she exclaimed, bending over him with brimming eyes. "There, there—do not weep!"

For an instant—a brief one—his moody soul was bathed in her tenderness, and he mistook the feeling for a ray of hope.

"God bless you for that! Perhaps you *may* love me, then? Perhaps—"

"As a sister, only, Heartstead."

"Oh, try—only try to love me, Ida!" groaned the wretched man, with renewed vehemence. "I will be your slave—I will do your slightest behest—I will die for you; only say that you *may*—not that you shall, but that you *may*—be mine! Give me hope, or death."

"You forget yourself, sir," said the lady, coldly. "I can not hear you further. Let me pass."

"Is it so?" he cried, springing to his feet, changed suddenly from the supplicant to the fierceness of despair. "Why, then, you *shall* be mine!"

She saw the mad glitter in his eyes, and

almost sunk beneath their scorching splendor. Then, for the first time, did this innocent girl experience what a terrible thing to her—what a terrible thing it must be to any woman—to confront a desperate man. The madman grasped her wrist. She tried to shriek, but could not; she felt his hot breath on her icy brow. She struggled, but in vain.

"Ida!" murmured the wretched young man, whom baffled passion was hurrying to insanity. "Ida! Ida!" he murmured; "God meant you for me. It is idle to struggle against Fate. I will bear you to a clergyman who awaits us. You must—"

She, also, through her agony of terror, caught the sound that interrupted her tormentor. It was the rapidly-approaching gallop of a horse, on the adjoining road. It sent a thrill of hope to her heart. Her strength was renewed; her voice returned to her aid. Shriek upon shriek she uttered, as she struggled to free herself from his arms. She paused. Her cry was answered by a loud halloo. She heard the horse stop scarcely a rod from where she was; then came the breaking of branches and the crushing of leaves, as if some one was bursting through the thicket to her aid. Just as Gleason had released her, and fled, with a cry of baffled purpose, her rescuer stood at her side, in the person of Colonel Cleveland; and Ida sunk senseless to the earth.

Cleveland took her in his arms and bore her to the edge of the river, to bathe her forehead in the wave. As he did so, and gazed upon her pure, fair brow and faultless face, so inanimate and still, a sweet, religious feeling of love and awe crept into his heart, and filled him with strange thoughts. Casting a hurried look around him, he bowed his head and imprinted a soft kiss upon her forehead. Then, as if alarmed at his own presumption, he hastily applied the cool current of the running water to her temples. She sighed, opened her eyes, and appeared bewildered:

"Where am I?"

"With one who will take good care of you," he replied, respectfully, but with a smile to reassure her. Then, seeing that she wished to arise, he released her from his support, and helped her to her feet.

"Not so fast, my dear lady! You are still feeble," he continued, as she tottered forward. "There—there; lean on my arm and we will walk up together." So saying,

and in spite of her slight resistance, he made her take his arm, and almost carried her toward the road.

There, placing her on his steed, he held her on with one hand, and, taking the bridle with the other, led the way up to Misty Mount, without a word; for the lady was still too agitated to speak much, and Colonel Cleveland was too well-bred to annoy her with questions—only too happy at having been the instrument of her delivery from peril, whatsoever it might have been.

But a few minutes were required to reach the mansion, and the gallant colonel put his lovely charge in the care of black Jenny, not, however, without receiving murmured thanks from the lady herself.

In a brief time her equanimity was perfectly restored. Of course it was impossible to keep from her father the name of her mad lover, and the colonel soon became aware of it also. The old man was in a towering rage. He vowed vengeance, if it took his last dollar to bring Heartstead to justice. But, Ida, fearing the consequences, and, now that she was safe at home, controlled by her forgiving nature, was disposed to alleviate the rage of her sire. Besides, she really did believe that Heartstead had been actuated by temporary insanity, and urged her plea for forgiveness like an angel of mercy.

"Help me, colonel—help me to soothe this grim protector of mine," she said, turning to Cleveland.

"Certainly; as far as you are yourself concerned in this affair, Miss, I shall do so," he replied; "but I am sorry to say that it is my duty to take this man in custody for another reason."

"Wherefore?"

"Because he is an enemy and a traitor to my Government, Miss."

"But, my dear sir, it appears very coincidental—this sudden prompting of your duty happening at the same time with this provoking affair of mine."

"Miss Gwin may, nevertheless, perceive that the coincidence was a mere freak of chance," replied the officer, taking a paper from his breast and presenting it to her. "Here," he continued, "is an order I received this morning from General Gates, directing the arrest of a certain Heartstead and a certain Charles Gleason, notorious Tories, and openly in arms for King George, who are supposed to be concealed at their

father's residence, in the vicinity of Valley-ton."

"It is, indeed, so; and I have nothing further to urge," said Ida. "But, alas! one of these young men you can not arrest. Charles Gleason is no more. His brother mentioned the fact of his death; and I have but just learned from Jenny that the young man was slain about two weeks ago, by an American officer, just where the North Road strikes the mountains."

"Great Heavens! can it be?" exclaimed Cleveland; "I greatly fear, then, that it was my hand that did the deed."

He briefly narrated the adventure with the party in ambush, much the same as we have heard it related by Heartstead Gleason to his father.

By this time Cleveland's escort, who were to aid in the contemplated arrest, came galloping up to the porch, and he led them to Gleason's house with the utmost dispatch and secrecy.

But, if they had been "shod with felt," and possessed of the fleetness of birds, their mission must have failed; for the keen eye of the watching Wandalo saw their arrival from his hiding-place, and guessing their object, had fled with his information to Judith.

And now, to return to the unhappy Judith, and the atmosphere of wickedness which hung so darkly around the dismal mansion of Jacob Gleason.

Night was drawing on, and the quadroom was expectantly sitting in front of the little arbor at the foot of the lawn, when she heard the low, shrill note of Wandalo's whistle, and the next instant he was at her side.

"What bring you?"

"Is not my brow dark with the evil news I bear?" said the wretched Indian.

"How!" cried Judith, with impatient emphasis. "Did you not perform my bidding? Did you not lead the girl into Heartstead's hands? Did he not carry her off in the canoe?"

"The Thunder-Mocker obeyed the Passion-Flower."

"And she escaped?"

"Ay—the Lily of the Valley is happy still."

He briefly related the rescue by Cleveland and the flight of Heartstead; together with the fact that the latter was in danger of arrest.

"The plot is not broken—only delayed,"

said Judith. "Do you not know some cavern in the mountains in which we can conceal the young man?"

"Yes; there is a cave on the eastern face of the Misty Mountain, which is known but to Wandalo and the eagles."

"Away, then, and bring Heartstead hither. I also will accompany you to the cave. Why do you hesitate?"

"Oh, my fierce, wild spirit!" cried the remorseful Indian, falling on his knees before her.

"What would you have?"

"Pity—pity for the white Lily of the Vale!"

"Never! Away, weak heart! Have you not learnt that pity was not for me? Away! and if you breathe that word again, we part forever!"

"Nay, say not so! See—Wandalo obeys his Flower!" whined the savage; and he slunk away in the woods.

In a few moments he returned, followed by Heartstead.

The latter eyed Judith with repugnance; but he did not now approach her with menace and abuse, as had been his custom. He had latterly learned to fear as well as to distrust her power over others. Nevertheless, there was gloom and hatred in his tone.

"Whither do you propose to hide me?" he asked.

"In Wandalo's cavern on the mountain," said Judith. "Be not downcast, Heartstead. She shall be your bride. The plot shall yet triumph."

"A curse on the plot and you together, you slave! I will no more of it."

"Coward!" she hissed between her teeth; "coward! are you dashed by such a little failure?"

"Yes," said he, moodily. "This morning I was at least a *man*. Now I am meaner than a dog. Say what you please; I give it up."

"There is one I know of who will be delighted with your valorous determination."

"Who?"

"Colonel Cleveland."

"Curse him!" cried the other, his face almost black with passion. "And yet—and yet," he continued, with more calmness, "what has Cleveland to do with the affair of this afternoon? He was not there."

"Not there! Ha! ha!" mocked the implacable quadroon, "you must have fled fast indeed, and without a backward glance. Why, man, *he* was her rescuer. Wandalo

saw him carry her to the river when she had swooned. Not only this, but Wandalo saw him kiss her forehead and embrace her."

"Oh, misery! can this be true?" groaned the wicked man. "Lead me wherever you will, then; do as you please with me; if I but have vengeance on this Cleveland—this murderer of my brother, I am satisfied."

Wandalo took the lead, while Judith and Heartstead followed him toward the mountain.

Their forms were scarcely out of sight of the open lawn, when Cleveland, at the head of his troop, came swiftly up the road, and, in a few moments the house was completely surrounded.

"Is there a person named Heartstead Gleason within this house?" asked the commander, of the astonished negro who had opened the door.

"No, sah."

"Is his father in?"

"Yes, sah."

"I would see him in private. Request him to come in the parlor," said the officer, entering the drawing-room with an air of most perfect *nonchalance*.

In a few moments old Jacob Gleason entered the room.

"To whom am I indebted for the honor of this visit?" he coldly inquired.

"To Colonel Cleveland, of the Continental army, sir. Do I address Mr. Jacob Gleason?"

"Yes, sir."

"I have an order for the arrest of your son, sir. He is at present within this house, or upon these premises. I demand that you produce him instantly."

"I assure you, sir, I know nothing of his whereabouts. He is at present with the army of Lord Cornwallis, I believe, and—"

"Excuse me, sir, you state that which is positively false," said the officer, firmly. "Not only is the person in question within this vicinity, but he, this afternoon, attempted to carry off the person of the daughter of your neighbor, Mr. Gwin. Your house is surrounded; I will search it immediately and without ceremony, unless you produce the man."

"Colonel Cleveland is at perfect liberty to search as much as he pleases," said the old man, coolly; well aware that he was safe in giving the permission, since Heartstead must by this time be far away.

So the search was instituted, and, of course, without result. The whole vicinity

was scoured, likewise, but with no better success; and, finally, late in the night, Cleaveland reluctantly gave the order to have done.

"Well, I expected nothing more, my dear colonel," said old Godfrey Gwin, when Cleaveland was standing despondently in the drawing-room of Misty Mount. "You see this is a wide valley; there are many clumps and thickets in it; and the neighboring mountains are honeycombed with caves. You have done your duty. Trust to luck, and another time."

CHAPTER VI.

The Mountain Cavern.

"The birds of the air shall leave their nests; the beasts shall seek the mountains; and in the caverns of the earth the hunted man shall make his dismal abode."

THE cavern to which Wandalo led Heartstead Gleason was situated nearly half-way up the rock side of Misty Mountain, and entirely invisible from below, so bold and huge was the rocky ledge that jutted over the narrow bridle-path which wound around the mountain but a few feet below the mouth of the cave. The entrance was, indeed, hardly discernible from a higher stand-point, as it was quite narrow, and thickly overgrown with briars and other underbrush, though the cavern itself broadened and lightened extensively a few paces from its mouth. It then ran deep into the breast of the mountain, like a long, dark, winding corridor, when, at a distance of probably four hundred feet from the outer world, the cavern suddenly made an end in a splendid, lofty chamber, which, when illuminated with torches, was rendered wonderfully lustrous by the reflection from the glittering spars and crystals which composed its sides, and hung in long stalactites from the arching roof.

Several nights after the events of the last chapter, this great natural temple in the heart of the mountain, as it might be called, was partially illuminated by several torches; and a party of Tories, mostly young men of the neighborhood, were in council therein, with Heartstead Gleason at their head. A rude table was placed in the center of the apartment, around which these worthies were sitting. In fact, it was more like a carouse than a council. The board was pretty liberally supplied with brandy and

wines, and a huge dish of fruits temptingly crowned the middle.

But there was one who sat at the board, and who drank deeply too, whose features were lined with the furrows of mental anguish. This was young Gleason. Occasionally he would join in the laugh of his comrades, but in a crazy, feverish way, which was a mockery to honest merriment. And then, again, he would rest his head upon his hand, with downcast eyes, as if his thoughts were far away, and in a gloomier sphere.

"Come, Heartstead," at length said Will Fashdon, a dashing young Tory, with a sword at his side and the red uniform of king George on his back, "are you always to be a skeleton at the feast? Confound it, man, you look the least like an expectant bridegroom of any man I ever saw!"

"As I am very far from being an expectant bridegroom, my appearance, then, will not cause me the slightest uneasiness," returned Gleason, with a dreary smile.

"What are we going to carry the girl off for, pray tell me, then?" asked Fashdon.

"Do you suppose she will love me, after I have carried her off, any readier than before?" said the young man, bitterly.

"The devil take the difference," chimed in Michael Field, an Irish Tory from further down the valley. "It's not ivery mon that can nab a wife without the troublesome ceremony of paternal consent."

This congratulatory rally produced a great deal of merriment; but Gleason only frowned, and relapsed into his melancholy reserve.

"Let me see; what was the time agreed upon?" asked Fashdon.

"Next Winsday night, you loon," said the Irishman. "Will you niver git done wid stuffin' that muddy head of yours with brandy?"

"It wasn't Wednesday, but Thursday," cried another.

"Ha! ha! Mike's as drunk as a bed-bug!" laughed the rest.

"I protist it was Winsday," said Field, getting angry.

It was left to Heartstead, but he could remember nothing.

"Call in Judith," said some one. "Wandalo! Wandalo!"

The savage appeared at the entrance.

"Call Judith!"

"She can come without calling," said the quadron, and the next instant she stood in their midst.

"Bless my sowl! She comes on to a mon like the ghost of a spirit," muttered the Irishman, looking really scared at the suddenness of her entrance.

"What was the time you fixed for the raid on Misty Mount, Judy?" asked Fashdon.

"Tuesday night, fool!" she exclaimed, contemptuously. "The time was fixed an hour ago. Every one heard it and agreed to it. You are drunk!"

"I don't care; I won't be jawed by a nigger—take that!"

The drunkard raised his fist to strike her; but before the blow could descend, an alarming hiss, like that of a rattlesnake, arrested it, and Fashdon turned his head to behold Wandalo, crouched on one knee, with his long rifle leveled at his breast.

"Let the white man strike the Passion-Flower," he hissed; "let him strike her, and he dies!"

"Pshaw!" said the Tory, returning to his seat with a forced laugh.

"Listen," said Judith, calmly, and as if nothing had happened; "listen, and I will repeat the scheme to all of you, so that there may be no mistake. Three nights hence—on Tuesday night—at the middle hour, you are to meet in this cave, leaving your horses on the bridle-path below the ledge. You are then to approach the manor and take the girl—by stealth if possible, by open force if necessary. She'll be safe enough here with Heartstead, I'll warrant."

"Very good," said one of the gang; "but what will you do with her afterward? She can't stay here always."

"That be her future husband's look-out," said the quadroon. "Away now! The morning breaks."

They were loth to leave the bottles, but, one by one, they dropped away. Wandalo, also, at a look from the quadroon, slunk into the dark entrance, and she was left alone with Heartstead. He sat silent, with his heavy head supported by a listless hand, and his eyes closed; but it was evident, by his labored breathing, and the occasional working of his features, that he did not slumber. Judith silently seated herself opposite him, and sat eyeing him; and, for a long time, they sat thus silently, observer and observed. There was something cold, deadly, frightful, in this subtle power, this magnetic will, which the once-beautiful woman exercised over those whom she would use or destroy. What could it be? The

hard, scheming nature of old Gleason, the passionate, moody spirit of Heartstead, the imperturbable, ferocious Indian—all were alike under her sway; and she a slave—the despised, trampled creature of an out-cast race. It was this—or something like it:

Judith had but one idea, one pursuit, one hope, one aim in life: and that was, Vengeance. She had long before bid adieu to joy; she was a stranger to the little pleasures from which even the most wretched are seldom totally debarred. Was it wonderful that that wild glitter which shone upon the one desire, the monomania of her blind, suffering soul—her accomplished vengeance—should have a charm, an only charm, for the fierce creature? Upon the man who now sat before her she looked as upon a mere instrument to attain her own ends. Not an atom of pity for his wretchedness entered the iron of her being. Perhaps she would crush him when his usefulness was gone. He was of the race which had trampled her down—down. Had she lived in our own times, she would, perhaps, have been the leader of an insurrection before which the horrors of St. Domingo would pale into insignificance. As it was, her baleful power extended its malignity to but few, and they innocent, or mostly so, of any blood, though not innocent of evil-doing.

Heartstead felt her burning gaze upon him, though his eyes remained closed. At length he moved uneasily.

"Take your eyes from me," he growled. "Take them away—they scorch my brain!"

But she did not move.

"Why do you thus torment and annoy me?" said the young man, rising from his seat impulsively, and pacing the floor of the cave. "I should not have come to this pass of villainy if it had not been for you," he continued, bitterly.

"Not without my help," said Judith. "But would you indeed have relinquished your little beauty—and to the hands of a rival?"

"No, no! blast him! She shall be mine. I will keep her here till she consents to be my wife. But what is this to *you*? You have no interest here. You know not the power of love, nor the anguish of soul to have a rival."

"No," said the quadroon, quietly. "But think you there is no other cause? *Your* motive in this scheme is as nothing compared to mine."

"I do not believe it," said the other.

"My motive is love—passion—what you will; yours but a blind malignity against one who never harmed a worm—whose soul is as snowy in its purity as an angel's in heaven."

"In what do they differ? My motive is the vengeance which has lived with my body and shall endure with my soul, though the Night that spheres it be as lasting as the universe. While yours—love, passion, as you call it—does it not also pluck the lily from its happiness? Does it propose to leave the vaunted whiteness of your lady-love untarnished?"

"True—true," said the young man, mournfully. "And yet—our motives widely differ. I would have her love by a sweet compulsion. I would make her happiness—her glory—my one sole aim in life; while you would destroy for destruction's sake. The bare reflection that she is pure, guileless, angelic, is as poison to your own fiendish soul."

"'Tis false!" cried Judith, sternly; "my vengeance is as holy as your passion. They are equally wicked; you take your pleasure in one, I in the other. Your case is worse than mine. You have not the incentive of remembered wrongs."

"Pshaw!"

"Yes—wrongs!" cried the fierce woman, her voice springing an octave higher, her eyes blazing, her bosom tossing like a stormy ocean, with the gathering passion that leaped to her lips. "Yes, wrongs, wrongs, wrongs!" she cried; "insult—trampled happiness—and the memory of a mother's wrongs as monstrous as my own! God! God! If I at this moment stood unspotted, angel-pure, the memory of that mother's wrongs alone should hound me on—alone should beckon me from afar with a bloody hand. I will pursue them to extermination! The name of Gwin shall not breathe upon the earth! And yet, how few they are!—it maddens me to think how few they are!—Oh!" cried the fury, "Oh, if I had the power, your *race* should perish! I crave for slaughter! My hungry vengeance starves for blood! I would kill, kill, kill, kill!"

"For God's sake, have done!" exclaimed Heartstead, aghast, bewildered at her passion. "By heaven, I renounce your designs! I break the plot! I will not be linked with such a being! Away! You terrify me!"

"You dare not, you can not escape me!" cried the virago, extending her hand toward him with an imperious gesture. She stood

there, calm but terrible. Her eyes blazed fixedly upon him, like a rattlesnake's; her right hand was stretched toward him like a loadstone; her whole form seemed dilated, colossal, superhuman.

"You will not fail me?" she hissed. "The deed shall be done? You will compel her to be your wife?"

"No, by heaven!" he cried, "I will *not* harm her. I defy you. I will—"

"But *Cleveland*—the happy *Cleveland*!"

"He shall not have her, curse him!" cried Heartstead like a madman; "he shall not have her! I consent—I will carry her off! He shall be thwarted, if I compass my own ruin!"

CHAPTER VII.

A Night of Darkness.

AFPAIRS had gone on in the same monotonous but pleasant way at Misty Mount and in the little village of Valleyton, where Cleveland's riflemen were quartered. The gallant colonel was still a frequent visitor at Misty Mount, and went deeper in love with its lovely heiress every day, but dared not breathe his passion until assured by time. One evening, however, *Tuesday* evening, he had been all the afternoon at the mansion, and was returning with Ida from a delightful ramble they had had among the hills, when he was strongly tempted to "trust his fate upon a word," she was so kind to him, and looked so entrancingly lovely in the mellow light which was flowing from the west. But his heart misgave him and he refrained until they were in sight of the porch, where Mr. Gwin was waiting for them, when, of course, his chance was over for that day at least. They had a delightful supper, and were rising, Cleveland intimating his intention to return to his family, as he called his riflemen, when Jenny came in and said it was raining.

"A mere shower should not delay a soldier," said the colonel, opening the door and looking out; but it was more than a shower. There was a strong gale blowing from the south-west, the rain was pattering sharply, and it was likely that a heavy storm would burst upon them in a short time.

"The equinox, or something like it, this time, my lad," said Godfrey. "There's no use of your returning to Valleyton to night; so consider yourself booked for up-stairs lodgings."

Ida also pressed him to stay; and, as the weather really seemed too threatening, Cleaveland at length consented.

The evening was spent in the usual way. Mr. Dudley, an old gentleman who lived but a mile away, was invited in for a game of whist. Then, when Mr. Dudley had become tired and gone home, and after both Ida and the colonel had played and sung pretty much every thing they could bring to mind, Mr. Gwin sat down to con over the old newspapers and to dream of victories over the red-coats, while the young persons played backgammon till bedtime.

"*Bonne nuit, Mademoiselle, et songes de plaisir!*" said Cleaveland, gayly, as he went up stairs, receiving as sweet a little fragment of French, in reply, as was ever pouted from pretty lips.

Her face would come before the colonel even when he closed his eyes. He remembered every little word she had spoken—every gesture—every smile; and it was long before he fell asleep.

He did sleep at last, however, and soundly for some time. When he awoke it seemed to be in the dead of night. The storm was sweeping out of doors with terrific violence, and yet Cleaveland was certain that he had been awakened by some sound not produced by the strife of elements—what it was he could not guess. There it was again. It sounded like a shriek, and yet so much like the yell of the wind around the chimneys that he listened again. It came once more, and this time there was no mistaking it; it was the shriek of a female in distress, and appeared to come from below his room. Bounding from the bed, he hastily huddled on his clothes, grasped his sword and pistol, and rushed out into the utter darkness of the hall. As he reached the head of the stairs, he heard a great uproar below—the oaths and wrangling of angry men, the loud voice of Godfrey, and, finally, that shriek again, and calling on his own name for help. Without a moment's hesitation, he sprung down the stairs, gained the lower floor almost at a bound, and burst into the drawing-room, whence the sounds proceeded. For an instant he staggered back, bewildered at the unexpected sight that greeted his horrified vision. The room was full of ruffians; the old man and a negro, who had fought for him, lay on the floor, weltering in their blood; and the beautiful Ida was struggling in the grasp of a fellow whose face was

concealed by a mask, as, indeed, were those of most of the party. The colonel recoiled for an instant; but it was for an instant only. His presence of mind returned in a flash. Crack! went his pistol, and the nearest robber rolled to the floor a corpse; another one dropped with a perforated heart as his sword leaped from its scabbard; and, the next instant, he was upon the ruffian in whose grasp the lady was struggling, who thereupon dropped his burden, and crossed swords with the rescuer with a growl of satisfaction. The weapons rung like bells as they clashed together, but they had barely done so before the weapon of the ravisher went whirling across the room, and his breast was defenseless. But a stroke from behind pierced the colonel's arm at this critical moment, and, before he was aware of it, a heavy slash descended on his head, partially stunning him, and immediately filling his eyes with blood. Fearful that he should be overcome, he sprung forward, as a last effort, and tore the mask from the face of the ruffian whom he had disarmed, disclosing the features of Heartstead Gleason; and then he fainted away.

It was broad daylight when he awoke. The storm had ceased, and the bright sun was streaming through the shattered window. His wounds had been merely flesh ones, but he was, nevertheless, weak from loss of blood, and regained his feet with difficulty. The prostrate forms around him, the confusion of the chamber and the shattered window quickly brought his wandering senses to the horrible recollection of what had passed. He examined the forms about him, and found that Mr. Gwin still breathed, though senseless from loss of blood; the rest—the negro, and the two ruffians whom his own hand had stricken down—were lifeless. With some difficulty on the part of the colonel, in a few minutes Mr. Gwin was revived and able to speak.

"Where am I?" he cried, wildly; "Oh, yes! At them! Strike them down! Do not cry, Ida, you shall be saved!"

"Compose yourself, my dear sir," said Cleaveland, tenderly. "Collect your thoughts that we may see what can be done."

Reason was not long in returning to old Godfrey, and with it the horrible consciousness that his daughter was gone. Together they searched the house, which everywhere bore marks of depredation. In the room of the young lady there were heart-rending evidences of the cruel raid. A rope-ladder,

left dangling from the outer edge of the window-sill, was conclusive proof that by this mode a portion of the gang, at least, had found entrance. The open wardrobe and some scattered articles of dress seemed to indicate that the terrified victim had dressed herself before she was seized. Lastly, the senseless form of the half-clad black wench, Jenny, was dragged from under the bed, which partly concealed her. She was stunned by a severe blow on the head, but a splash of cold water revived her.

"Mass'r, Mass'r! Cunnel Cleaveland! Pompey! Cæsar! help, help!" she began to squall with returning consciousness. "Kick him in de jaw, Miss Ida! Wait till I get in his har! Help, help! Mass'r! Cunnel!"

"Stop your howling, wench! Tell us what you know of this," exclaimed her master.

From what could be gathered, the chamber had been forced in the midst of the storm, some of the gang entering by the window, others by the door, having forced the drawing-room window below. Hearing the sounds, but cut off from escape, Ida had hastily dressed herself, at the same time crying out loudly for help. But the room had been immediately forced, Jenny knocked senseless with the butt of a pistol, and her mistress gagged and borne down the stairs. The ruffians reached the drawing-room before they saw Godfrey, and were on the point of escaping by the window, when the old man entered, with his walking-stick in his hand, followed by his faithful coachman. The latter had been almost immediately slain by a pistol-shot, and, although the old man fought hard, it was not many seconds ere he was likewise laid low. The rest of the tale, after Cleaveland entered upon the scene, we are already acquainted with.

To describe the heartrending anxiety which attended and followed these developments were a sorry and useless task. Nothing could be obtained as a clue to the villains, or to the place in which they had immured their victim. Another of the slaves belonging to the place had been killed at the barn, and two more wounded in endeavoring to defend their master's property. All the hands on the plantation were assembled, and questioned, but nothing elicited. The horses had all been stolen from their stalls. Nevertheless, Cleaveland led a party of armed negroes over to Jacob Gleason's plantation in the vain hope of extorting

something from him; but without success. Nevertheless, they took him in custody, and roused the planters of the vicinity with the harrowing tale. At length, as the party were returning to Misty Mount, Cleaveland was much gratified to see a dozen of his own rough-riders galloping up to the house from the camp at Valleyton.

"Now we will have a chance!" he joyfully cried, to Gwin, who was moodily awaiting him. "I will scour the entire mountain from summit to base with these hardy fellows, and with far better cheer, depend upon it!"

But the colonel's face fell as he read a paper which one of his men, dismounting, respectfully handed to him.

"Good God!" he exclaimed to his host. "I must go! I am ordered off immediately to join Campbell and others in an attack on King's Mountain. How can I leave you?"

"How, indeed?" replied Gwin.

"I will not leave you in this strait—by Heaven I will not!" exclaimed the colonel, warmly. "Fifty orders shall not compel me to relinquish this search before I restore your daughter to your arms."

The old man covered his face with his hands for a moment, and his frame quivered with the deep emotion which possessed it. But, in a few seconds he mastered his feelings, looked up, and said, firmly:

"Colonel Cleaveland, your warmth is grateful to my broken heart; but you must, nevertheless, obey the call of your country. You must not even think of disregarding it. The welfare of my daughter, sir, is as a feather's weight in the scale wherein our country's safety is balanced. Farewell! I hope we shall meet again. Howsoever that be, may God-speed be with you now and hereafter. Farewell!"

It was with feelings of scarcely controllable emotion that Cleaveland grasped the extended hand of the noble old man, whose sublime patriotism had thus triumphed over impulses as deep and strong as a father can feel for his only child.

"You are right," murmured the colonel, with a trembling lip. "Believe me, sir, I can appreciate your noble conduct which thus recalls me to a sense of duty. Oh, I can sympathize with you more than you imagine, sir!"

"Why?" inquired the other, surprised at his guest exhibiting an emotion almost as profound as his own.

Cleaveland glanced around and perceived that they were standing apart, and beyond ear-shot of his men. And yet he hesitated in reply. His irresolution was but of a moment's duration, however.

"A vicissitude like this demands frankness, Mr. Gwin, and I will speak frankly," said he. "The double reason that my interest in your daughter's safety is so strongly evinced is one, sir, which I now avow. I—I love your daughter—deeply, devotedly, passionately."

"Have you ever spoken to Ida, colonel?" asked the old gentleman, with a pleased expression of the careworn face that made the young man's heart thrill with a strange joy.

"Never," was the reply. "I am wholly ignorant of Miss Gwin's feelings toward me, and would hesitate to wound her gentle nature by a confession of sentiments which might displease her. I merely mention it that you may know that *my* sacrifice in being compelled to abandon the search is not inconsiderable. Forgive me if I have been bold; I meant only—"

"I have nothing to forgive, my dear colonel," said the old man, as heartily as his anxiety would permit. "As far as I am concerned, you have my hearty approval in your suit."

"You make me very happy," said the colonel. "Now, a word before I go, and I think it may cheer you. We have come to the conclusion that the raiders of last night were mostly Tories of *this* vicinity—mainly in the service of the king. Is it not most likely that the service which calls me away so abruptly to the field must also call every Tory within summoning distance to the other side? Ferguson, who commands the red-coats at King's Mountain, has doubtless had wind of our approach, and, depend upon it, he will rake up every available man to meet us. Every Tory around us must, at this moment, be on the wing to join him. Whatever may have been their designs in carrying off Miss Gwin, in all probability she is at present merely kept in concealment, to await the event of the battle and young Gleason's return—that is, if he remain true to his colors."

"There is much wisdom in what you say," said Gwin, thoughtfully. "It relieves my anxiety considerably. But the quest shall not fall off in your absence. In the mean time, if you should meet with the villain who carried her off—"

"May an avenging fate permit that I may!" exclaimed the colonel, fervently, his right hand instinctively clutching the hilt of his sword. "One of us shall perish, if we meet! Farewell!"

He galloped to the head of his escort, and, in a few minutes, the little troop were dashing swiftly down to Valleyton.

CHAPTER VIII.

The Dove in the Hawk's Nest.

"Why circles the Hawk o'er the blossoming grove?
Why down does his crooked beak stoop?
Because in the wood sits a white-feathered Dove,
And the Hawk is preparing to swoop."

As we have seen, a happy state of oblivion enveloped the lovely victim of the Tories' raid, when they bore her away from the house and the prostrate forms of those who would have protected her. When her consciousness returned, Ida could scarcely realize even the more material facts of her dilemma. At first she thought that she was in a dungeon. The narrow couch upon which she was reclining she could feel with her hand to be composed of the furry skins of wild beasts; and the feeble glimmer of a small iron lamp, which was hung from the low ceiling, showed the walls of her new apartment to be of granite. Indeed, as she examined their structure more intently, she discovered that no mortal masonry was concerned in the low, vaulted ceiling or narrow walls, but that they were of the solid rock without a seam. This convinced her that she must be in a cavern, smoothed, doored and otherwise assisted to the formation of this regular-shaped cell; which only increased her anxiety. An old-fashioned clothes-press, a stool and a small deal table, with a bowl and pitcher of water thereon, and the couch upon which she had now risen to a sitting posture, constituted the sole furniture of the desolate dungeon, whose floor was of the same solid, immutable granite as the walls and ceiling. Having gathered together her scattered faculties in making these discoveries, the first thing which the terrified maiden did was to cry very heartily and bitterly; which was perfectly natural. A man, even—thus awakening from home, kindred, and the limitless freedom of the open atmosphere to the stifling air, chill gloom, and cramped dimensions of a subterranean dungeon—would have been likely to give way to some

Impulses of terrified surprise; what then must have been the anguish of this poor child of luxurious innocence at her unaccountable imprisonment? How must the heart of this little dove have palpitated with despair at discovering that the hawk had borne her to his eyrie. But a few moments, however, were required to bring Ida to a more valliant state of mind, for she was naturally of a brave disposition, and had frequently been vaunted by her father for an amount of "pluck" beyond the usual lot of womankind. Her thoughts were, naturally, at first occupied with reflections upon the motives which could have prompted this outrage upon her liberty and the doers of the deed. Reluctantly, but indubitably, she was at length forced to the conclusion that Heartstead Gleason must be her principal persecutor, prompted by his insane passion for herself and aided by his fellow-Tories of the neighborhood; she could think of no others as concerned in the unmanly plot. Indeed, if she had been aware of the extent of Judith's hatred toward herself and her family, she might have ascribed the chief complicity of the plot to where it rightly rested. But, she knew nothing of this. Her father had always been singularly reticent with regard to what he might know of her, and Judith herself was but known to Ida as the bad-tempered housekeeper of Jacob Gleason, whom, according to the gossip of the valley, she ruled with a rod of iron.

Having thus satisfied her own mind as to the identity of her persecutors, and well aware of the imminent peril she was in, the brave girl arose to take a further survey of the premises. By a little careful trimming, the lamp was made to emit a considerably stronger beam, when the first novel object that attracted her attention was the door of the apartment, remarkable for its appearance of solidity, and for the size of the hinges and bolts which secured it, and a small window or lattice, diamond-shaped, and so deeply set into the further wall of the dungeon as to be almost invisible in an uncertain light. She first tried the door—merely for the sake of trying, however, as the bolts were shot into their sockets from without the chamber, and would have defied the strength of a Milo. She then tried the lattice, with much more confidence of success. It was only closed with a latch, and immediately yielded to her effort. The solid darkness which confronted her was, for an

instant, absolute; but presently the rays of the lamp that swung from the ceiling struggled through the gloom, and glinted faintly on an obstacle a few feet from the opening. This she could reach and touch with her hand, by which she was made aware that it was a blank wall of granite, crusted with glittering crystals and spars. Leaning almost her whole body through the lattice, so thick was the wall in which it was set, she turned her glance upward, and there, far, far above her, she saw the stars shining in a clear heaven, but somewhat obstructed by what appeared the interlacing branches of trees. She then loosened a fragment of crystal from the opposite wall, and let it drop. A cold shudder ran through her frame as she heard the missile going down, down—echoing and echoing against the sides of the cavern, until the reverberations gradually died away in the depths below. She could also now distinguish another faint echo, which was continuous, and which she rightly conjectured to be the sound of falling water. She came to the conclusion that her dungeon lattice opened upon a fissure in the mountain, very narrow but of prodigious depth; and her former impression that her dungeon was the cell of some cavern, piercing very deep into the mountain, was confirmed. She also knew, from the appearance of the stars above her head, that her cell must be very far below the surface of the earth. Without thinking of the illusive effect of the deep darkness through which she peered up to the heavens, she thought that it must still be night, because the stars were shining so brightly; whereas the fact was that broad daylight had already broken upon the upper world. It took but a moment to convince her that any escape by way of the chasm was absolutely out of the question, as the sides were almost smooth—and, had they been otherwise, the possibility of clambering them, with that dreadful, echoing, bottomless gulf below, would have been exceedingly dubious. As she was about to draw back into her cell, her eye was arrested by something which gleamed with unusual luster from a little projection of the opposite wall, but a few feet below her position. She managed to reach and possess it, and it was with an exclamation of genuine joy that, when she brought it into the light, she saw that it was a small dagger, which had evidently fallen or been thrown from the top of the chasm, and had lodged on the place where she

found it. Its blade was hardly rusted, and its hilt was thickly crusted with real gems. A stern smile flitted over the maiden's features as she concealed this prize within the bosom of her dress. She felt stronger, more confident, than before. With a vigilant eye, and faculties quickened by her peril, was she not now safe—at least in one sense? Her heart beat rapidly at the thought; but it beat braver, firmer, with the hilt of that small dagger pressing against it. She could not, however, help thinking of the manner in which the weapon had been lodged on the side of the chasm, and morbid images of conjecture flitted through her mind. If the dagger could speak, what dark history of murder might it not unfold? She leaned out of the lattice again, and looked at the niche from which she had taken it with a gloomy curiosity. She shuddered at the idea that perhaps it was the sole, silent witness of some terrible deed—some foully murdered human form which had been flung from the dizzy brink above—perhaps from the edge of the lattice from which she gazed!—and had gone thundering down to the unknown depths below. But, the grating sound of the withdrawal of bolts at her prison-door quickly changed this train of thought for an anxious expectancy, and she hastily reclosed the little window, got down from her perch, and stood waiting.

The last of the massive bolts clanged back from its socket, the door creaked open, and Judith entered the apartment. Her demeanor was much different from its usual pride and gloom. There was a gentle, almost sweet, expression on her lips, and the old wild beauty of the quadroon maiden seemed to shine out through the attenuated lineaments of time with a subdued luster which was wonderfully winning and trust-inspiring. She was also dressed more neatly than usual. Her jet-black, profuse wealth of hair was gathered up plainly, neatly, and yet with a certain elegance, which added to the quiet charm of her whole appearance. Ida scarcely recognized the Judith she had been accustomed to know and vaguely fear, in the trim respectfulness of the pretty woman who now entered her apartment. Instinctively the forlorn heart of the captive maiden leaped toward her with an impulse of sympathy. She sprang forward and caught the quadroon by the hand, while her large blue eyes looked trustingly in the dark orbs of the other, as if seeking and bestowing confidence at the same time.

"Tell me—tell me, Judith," she faltered, "why I am treated in this inhuman manner. Oh, think of my father (if he be yet alive). Oh, think of the anguish my absence must cause him! Help me to escape! I see you are kind and good. Pray, help me! What is the meaning of this? Who brought me here?"

"One, sweet maiden," replied Judith—and her tones were as gentle as a dove's—"one who would sooner die than cause you pain. If you could behold the brimming heart that prompted to this deed, you would forgive the means by which it sought to woo you. Alas! it is the heart of one grown mad with love."

"His name?"

"Heartstead Gleason. Nay, do not blame till you have heard," purred Judith. "Lady, he loves you as a poet loves the stars in heaven. He will do any thing—he will die for you."

"Does he think to win my love by tearing me from my home—by maiming or slaying my protectors?" asked the maiden, with bitter sarcasm. "We do not hurt that which we love; we cherish it with gentleness and kindness. Why does he, then, tear me from my home? Why am I abused, insulted, in this way?"

"Lady, because he is *mad*!" whispered Judith, with an air of mystery. "I do not use the word merely as it applies to hearts distraught with passion. I mean to say that, at this moment, Heartstead Gleason is mad—utterly insane through grief and jealousy."

"But I can not help it," said Ida, remonstratingly. "I do not love the man simply because I can not. I suspected he was insane when he met me the other day in the forest, and offered me violence. I suspected this, and forgave him in my heart. I am sure I am sorry I can do nothing to restore him to reason; but—"

"Lady, you can—you can do every thing. You are the only one who can restore him."

"How?"

"Give him your love—give way but an iota to his blind, blazing passion, and he will be restored," said the wily quadroon.

"Most certainly I will do nothing of the kind!" exclaimed the haughty heiress of Misty Mount, indignantly. "I demand to be instantly released from this dismal place! Let me go immediately! It ill comports with your seeming gentleness, Judith, that you thus play the jailer to an innocent being who never wronged you in thought or deed."

"What! You—you never wronged me! If I did but think that—" By a great effort Judith controlled the wild passion of her true nature, which had almost betrayed her to Ida. "Forgive me! I—I—that is—" she stammered. "Believe me, sweet lady, you somewhat wrong *me* in what you say. Remember, I am but a slave. My master's son compels me to act the part in which you despise me. He wishes to make you his wife. For your own sweet sake I would advise you—"

"Allow me to decline any advice you may think necessary or benevolent to bestow," said Ida, proudly interrupting her. "To become the wife of one we can not love is dishonorable; and any advice which points to the surrender of a maiden's purest inheritance on earth—her self-respect—is no longer advice, it is villainy!—it is no longer precept, it is insult! Away! I will have no more of you!"

Reproach—tearful reproach, leaped out from the dark eyes of the quadroon, at these words; and yet she replied as demurely and respectfully as before:

"Since it is your desire, Miss, to think ill of me, do so. It is not for a slave to reply to the heiress of Misty Mount. If you please, Miss, will you permit me to go, now?"

"Yes—but stay! To whom do you go?" asked Ida, as the slave-woman was passing through the door.

"To my master, Miss."

"Bid him set me free this instant," cried Ida, haughtily. "I will not see him in this dungeon. I will see him as a free woman, or never!"

"Yes, Miss." And the quadroon disappeared, closing and bolting the door behind her.

Ida paced the floor in a haughty mood. The spirit of command, bred by her indolent, willful life, was struggling desperately with the hard circumstances, the humiliating powerlessness, by which she was surrounded. But she had little time for thought or anger, for, in a few moments the bolts again clanged back, the immense door again creaked laboriously on its huge hinges, and Heartstead Gleason stood before her.

He was even paler, thinner, than usual; and the fierce, insane light of passion still blazed in his eyes with a fitful gleam. He was dressed in a captain's regimentals of his majesty's army—scarlet coat and breeches, with heavy riding-boots and spurs—as if prepared for a campaign.

"Ida!"

She did not answer. Her indignation made her mute.

"Ida," he began, in tremulous tones, "Ida, I have come—"

"I care not for what you have come!" she burst forth, passionately. "I demand my instant release! Once I pitied you—now I but hate you! No words but of scorn until I stand released!"

"Ida—forgive this artifice—"

"It is no artifice, sir! Palliate it not by that mildly wicked name. It is insult—outrage—crime! Release me on this instant!"

"Ida, forgive! My passion has set me mad! My love—"

"It is false!" she cried, vehemently; "you are a stranger to love! Your utterance of it is a profanation of the holy name! Let me go, I say! Release me from this dungeon!"

"Ida! Ida! oh hear me!" cried the really half-demented man, falling on his knees in a paroxysm of despair. "Hear me!" he moaned. "I love you—madly, madly! No one can tell you *how* I love you! Save me, or we are both engulfed in one ruin. Help me, or I perish with this consuming passion. Speak, Ida, will you not save me?—will you not love me?"

"Never!" cried the maiden, stung to desperation by the humiliation of her position. "Trust no more in me! If I ever regarded you as a friend, that friendship is now turned to hatred—eternal hatred! If you have poisoned my regard, you must suffer its bane! Release me, I say!"

The young man sprung to his feet, and eyed her with the moody glance of despair.

"Reflect!" he exclaimed, in icy tones. "Reflect! You are in my power—utterly—absolutely—irrevocably!"

"I have reflected," was the scornful rejoinder.

"Is it so?" he cried, his rage gathering fury as he spoke. "Listen, woman. There is one in waiting who has the legal power to make you my wife. Your beauty has driven me mad—desperate! I must—I *will* have you! You confront a desperate man!"

He advanced toward her. Ida forgot all about her dagger. She was completely bewildered by the maniac blaze of those burning eyes. She was terrified by the vehemence of his demeanor, and burst into tears.

"Have pity—pity," she sobbed, dropping

on her knees before him, and extending her clasped hands with an imploring gesture. "Pity! for God's, for your mother's sake, pity!"

He paused, tottering, like a man in a dream. Her tears were washing away his evilness; something of the old, inborn angel illuminated his passion-torn features.

"Yes, I will pity," he muttered, brokenly; "I will not harm you. Live—he free!"

She sprang to her feet with a joyous look.

"*But Cleaveland—Colonel Cleaveland!*" cried a mocking, fiendish voice, through the thick door from without.

"Curse him! curse him!" groaned the irresolute villain, relapsing into his former fury. "Ida, it must not be! You are mine, and shall be wedded to me. Cleaveland never shall claim you as his."

Ida had drawn the dagger from her bosom, and held it aloft with frightful earnestness of intent. The villain reeled back, disconcerted, amazed.

"Another time!" he muttered; "another time!" and, without another word, he slunk back through the entrance, and swung the ponderous door behind him.

She waited till she heard the strong bolts shot back into their places—what a glad, sweet sound it now was!—and the footsteps of her retreating enemy echo far off along the floor of the outer cavern, when the sudden iron which had entered her being to support it in her hour of need, melting in the hot revulsion, she fell upon her knees, and, amid tumultuous sobs, poured forth prayers for deliverance from the danger which confronted her.

In spite of the entreaties and taunts of Judith, Heartstead immediately mounted his steed, and set out for the field, whither he had been called by the British leader, who had resolved to court a conflict then and there.

CHAPTER IX.

King's Mountain.

Some love to roam on the dark sea's foam,
Where the wild winds whistle free;
But a merry band in a mountain land,
And a rifle good for me!—OLD SONG.

WE beg the reader's attention for a moment, while we set forth more fully than already has been done in the introductory chapter, the military occurrences which immediately preceded, and, in fact, were con-

ducive to the brilliant battle which this chapter is intended to describe.

From the first dawn of the Revolution throughout the Northern colonies—from the inauguration of war at the battle of Lexington, a desultory struggle was kept up throughout the Southern colonies of Virginia, the two Carolinas and Georgia, between the patriotic fighters for liberty, on one hand, and the English forces, or red-coats, as they were popularly called, on the other. These latter were materially aided, from time to time, by those of our early population more generally known in history as Tories, who were still faithful—many, probably most of them, honestly so—to the king's cause. Some of the most interesting of the military movements which took place between these parties toward the close of the war, chiefly in the course of their respective efforts to gain possession of the State of North Carolina, will be of interest as relating to the affair at King's Mountain, in which Colonel Cleaveland, as well as most of the Tories who have thus far figured in our story, was engaged.

Charleston, and the American army there, under General Lincoln, having surrendered, as we have seen, to the British commander, Sir Henry Clinton, who had returned to the North, leaving Lord Cornwallis behind to finish the subjugation of the Southern colonies, the latter had passed the early summer months of this year in traversing the interior counties of South Carolina; but, on the whole, to little purpose. But, the embers of patriotism, which had been, with difficulty, kept alive in that dubious State by the efforts of such noble spirits as Marion, Sumter, Pickens and others, were almost utterly extinguished, as we have seen, by the subsequent disaster to the American arms at Camden, under General Gates, whose Northern laurels were fast turning to Southern willows, according to the prediction.* This unfortunate event left the State of South Carolina almost at the mercy of the invaders. Gates retreated to Hills-

* Gates was a resident of Berkley county, Virginia, and in this vicinity lived several officers of eminence in the Revolution, among them Generals Lee, Muhlenburgh, Morgan and Stephens. So great had been the success of General Gates at the North, his maneuvers having culminated in the defeat and capture of Burgoyne and his army, that he at one time rivaled even Washington in popularity; and it was with an unusual degree of confidence that Congress appointed him to succeed the unfortunate Lincoln at the South. But, about this time, Charles Lee, one of the neighbors, made a prediction that the "Northern laurels" of the popular General would not be long in turning to "Southern willows," which was afterward, in some degree, verified.

borough, in North Carolina. Cornwallis pursued, in the hope of repossessing the whole region lying South of Virginia. In this advance he commanded his main force in person, while one detachment, under the notorious Colonel Tarleton, ravaged the country nearer the sea-coast, and another, under Colonel Ferguson, proceeded through the Highlands, near the upper frontiers of the State, and across the sources of the rivers. The principal object expected of Ferguson was the rousing of the loyalists in that remote and sparsely-settled quarter to rebel openly against the authority of Congress, and lend their aid to the British arms. While endeavoring, with considerable success, to carry out this programme, Ferguson was advised by Cornwallis of an attack about to be made by an American party of seven hundred militia, under the valorous Colonel Clarke, on the British garrison then stationed at Augusta. That garrison had, meantime, held out four days against the attack, and, at the end of that time, were relieved by Colonel Cruger, with a large force, which compelled the Americans to withdraw. Ferguson now proposed to lay in wait for the retreating Clarke, at a place called KING'S MOUNTAIN. But, while halting to execute this design, he heard of the approach of a new enemy—still so indefatigable were the efforts of the patriots in watching and harassing every movement of the foe in his triumphal march. This new party was a large number of riflemen, mostly mounted, which had been drawn together under the command of Colonels Campbell, Cleaveland, Williams, Sevier, Shelby and others. They were mainly from Kentucky and the upper sections of Virginia and North Carolina, and were by no means such a force as Ferguson could afford to despise. It had been the intention of General Gates to employ this force, like that of Clarke, to surprise and capture Augusta. In fact, this little army, with the exception of Cleaveland's command (which remained at Valleyton, in North Carolina), had already started upon this mission, and were southward, between Augusta and Ferguson's ambush, when they heard of Clarke's repulse at Augusta, which altered their intentions considerably, as it would be madness for them to attempt the storming of the strong works at Augusta when defended by so strong a force as Cruger's. So they detoured about and attack Ferguson, and they were well in-

formed, and Cleaveland received orders, as we have seen, to march immediately from Valleyton, and coöperate in the attack from the north. Thus Ferguson, while lying in wait for Clarke's return, was exposed to a force which had been watching his own course with similar kind intentions. He, however, though unable to escape, did not despair, but took an exceedingly strong position on the summit of King's Mountain, the approaches to it being exceedingly difficult, rough, precipitous, and thickly timbered.

Let us now leave the Americans as they approach the rocky fortress from the south, and return to our hero, whom we last saw riding in hot haste from the mourning mansion of Misty Mount to his riflemen's quarters at Valleyton. Although not wanting in the soldierly ardor which burns brighter at the prospect of battle, the heart of Cleaveland was woefully depressed with every hoof-beat that lengthened the distance between him and Misty Mount, where the sire of his beloved was lamenting her loss in lonely despair, and in the neighborhood of which, perhaps, she herself was immured—bewailing what fate—exposed to what peril? His shuddering imagination shrunk from the contemplation of its own dark imagery. The horror that possessed him, as he thought of her in the hands of an unscrupulous enemy, was indescribable. And then this order to battle, which tore him from a search for the eidolon of his heart—it was agonizing. The soldier struggled with the lover in his distracted breast. The joyous bugles of his riflemen, as they enthusiastically struck their tents—the merry jingle of their spurs as they sprang to their saddles for the war-path—the neighing of the steeds and the lively flutter of the starry ensign in the morning air—all these found but a faint echo in the commander's bosom, which had been wont to bound exultingly in response to their martial sound, but where now his new love moaned in anxiety and pain. It was, therefore, with a haggard cheek and somber brow that Cleaveland rode at the head of his two hundred braves on this bright autumnal morning. It is true, he was usually somewhat melancholy and reserved; but, not so when advancing to battle. His men could not help noticing the present gloomy contrast to the glad, victorious expression which usually hung, like a laurel wreath,

round the temples of their chief as he neared the foe; but they knew him too well—had fought under him too long, to ascribe his gloom to aught of apprehension or unsoldierly dubiousness as to the affair in hand, and had no doubt that the actual shock of battle would strike out the old fire from the nature which they knew to be steel.

There was one thought, one hope, that blazed like a star in the gloom of Cleaveland's soul. He might meet the destroyer of his peace on the field. The red gleam of battle might reveal to him again those hateful features from which he had torn the mask on that hideous night of rapine. How his heart leaped—how he clutched the hilt of his sword at the thought of that possible meeting! The gloom of his stern lips broke into a cruel smile as that sweet hope of vengeance brightened his sorrowful breast.

It was a long ride from Valleyton to the place of contemplated battle; but, by sundown of the first day nearly half the distance was accomplished, and the hardy rangers were encamped on the banks of the Catawba with light hearts. The country was wonderfully beautiful in its autumnal garb; but, as night drew on, the air came down from the murky mountains in their rear, with a chilliness which made the camp-fires comfortable for the outer man. The rude fare of the riflemen was soon prepared and dispatched, and they stretched themselves in their blankets for a long night's snooze. Cleaveland sat alone by the feeble embers of a camp-fire, on the bank of the running stream. He could not sleep, and sought in vain for a refuge from his haunting thoughts. The night was splendid. Every thing around him was beautiful and lovely. The stars were abroad in their olden glory. The bright half-moon was rising above the poplar tops of the opposite shore, and her holy splendor rolled upon the shimmering and peaceful stream, and bathed the forms of his sleeping comrades with marvelous sweetness. Now and then the faint calls and responses of his distant pickets would come to his ear in a dreamy way, or a lonely whistle from some night-bird in the near timber would echo out strangely on the night. Perhaps the beauty of the landscape soothed his aching heart; but, presently, as if a sweeter balm was sent him from above, he heard the far-off dip of a boatman's oar, and, as it neared him, a melodious voice accompanied it, and

came floating down the moonlit stream in a pensive song.

"My boat on the clear Catawba's tide
Is drifting to the sea;
And over the current smooth and wide
The bloomy borders be.

"The bloomy banks that take the sun
All day in a blissful dream;
And show their forms when the day is done
In the glass of the gliding stream.

"And my boat is swinging, swinging slow,
With the light on her folded wings;
And under her keel, in the crystal flow,
Her trembling shadow swings.

"Oh, dear to me is the tender sweep
Of Catawba's brimming flood;
And dear the willows that downward weep,
And the banks, in bloom or bud.

"It minds me of the placid maid
Whom I loved in the long-ago,
But whose course was lost in the somber shade
Where the Stygian waters flow.

"But I know she floated, floated far,
Till the stream grew glad and bright,
Like a river of gold in a chosen star,
Or Catawba's stream to-night.

"So bear me, bear me, glad and free,
Bright river with verdure lined;
There heavens in sight the sunny sea
Where her shallop waits the wind."

As the sweet voice of the singer ebbed away, he swung into view from the shade of the overhanging willows he had sung of, and his boat drifted dreamily down the shining stream. Cleaveland watched the lonely boatman, with a feeling of envy, till he was shut from sight by a bend of the river. And then, again, as the dip of the oars was dying away, the pensive voice of the singer was heard in repetition:

"It minds me of the placid maid
Whom I loved in the long-ago,
But whose course was lost in the somber shade
Where the darker waters flow.

"But I know she floated, floated far,
Till the stream grew glad and bright,
Like a river of gold in a happy star,
Or Catawba's stream to-night.

"So bear me, bear me, glad and free,
Bright river with verdure lined;
There heavens in sight the sunny sea
Where her shallop waits the wind."

"How I envy him!" mused the gloomy colonel. "And yet, might I not take a lesson from the boatman's pensive song? *His* love is dead, beyond his mortal ken and hope; yet he knows that 'her shallop but waits the wind' that shall bear him through eternity by her side. *My* love is, in all probability, alive; but where?—in what hands? Heaven help her! She may need it!"

He heaved a deep sigh, and relapsed into his former mood of somber contemplation. Presently, as if worn out by his own harassing thoughts, he stretched himself by the remains of the fire, and slumber at last came to his relief.

It was probably in the dead of night,

when the deepest hush presided over the sleeping camp, that a swift but silent canoe, impelled by the stealthy paddle of an Indian, glided out from beneath those overhanging trees above the camp. It neared, and, at length, touched the shore, without a splash, and the inmate leaped lightly to the turf. At first he crouched close to the ground, and made his way to the top of the bank with the utmost caution, for the call of the distant sentinels had made him aware of the presence of armed men. But, seeing that the camp was asleep, he raised his tall figure to its full height, and began to examine the different forms, as if searching for some one. Near by lay the sleeping colonel, his face upturned to the moon, which was now almost in the zenith; and, as the keen eye of the savage rested upon him, it was evident that this was the form for which he was seeking. As noiseless as the shadow of a cloud, the Indian glided up to the prostrate sleeper, with parted lips and a haggard, anxious face. And yet he drew no knife, he detached no tomahawk from his belt, as one might have expected, had the Indian been seen; no, he only drew a little scrap of smooth white birch-bark from the pouch at his belt, and, stooping on one knee, made it fast to the colonel's coat-sleeve. Having accomplished this without arousing the sleeper, the Indian glided back to his canoe as silently as he had left it, and, in a few moments, was far down the river, and out of sight.

When the shrill blare of the bugle aroused the rangers at break of day, to resume their march, the colonel was amazed to find the piece of bark pinned to his sleeve. His astonishment was augmented after he had detached it and read thereon, penciled in rude capitals, as if by the hand of an urchin at primer-school, these words:

"Fear not for the Lily of the Vale. She is alive and safe."

WANDALO."

Not doubting the genuineness of this warning, as he was aware that Wandalo could read, and was, therefore, capable of the inscription on the bark, the colonel was, nevertheless, astonished to think of how the missive had been fastened to his coat. He made no mention of the circumstance to any one, however, contenting himself with sharply questioning the sentinels. Of course they knew nothing, having been posted back from the banks of the stream, so that the colonel gradually came to the correct conclusion that it was by the river that the

message had been accomplished. He had never shared in Mr. Gwin's opinion of the trustworthiness of the Indian—that is, he believed him to be in some sort of complicity with the Tories; but there was something about this warning which seemed to bear the impress of truth. He knew that, whatever of revenge and hatred Wandalo might cherish against the party who had slain his sons, his fatherly fondness for the lovely heiress of Misty Mount was genuine and profound. This led him to conclude that the savage really knew that what he had written was true. Perhaps the colonel, like a drowning man, who catches at the veriest straw, was a little over-credulous in thus hastily imbibing comfort from the mysterious missive; but his mind was woefully depressed, and any thing in the shape of hope was grateful and solacing. At any rate, it was with a much lighter heart and sunnier face than the day before that he now proceeded at the head of his troops.

Again halting on the banks of the river as night fell, this time but a few miles from the base of King's Mountain, the band were met by a courier from General Gates. By this messenger the commander received intelligence of the manner in which the red-coats were intrenched on the mountain, also a map of the region, with an order from the General commanding him to begin the attack upon *his* side of the mountain at seven o'clock in the morning, when the coöperating forces, under Campbell and Sevier, would, shortly afterward, storm the heights from the southern slope.

They slept on their rifles, with a dotted line of pickets, and, at the first streak in the sky, were mounted and cautiously on the move.

"King's Mountain" is hardly worthy of the dignity with which its name would seem to invest it—being merely a hill of considerable elevation, the lower half of the slopes being rather lightly timbered and of easy ascent. Nevertheless, the upper portion of the mountain is exceedingly rough and steep, thickly grown with pines and firs, and affording an excellent natural defense; while the summit, being almost as flat as a table, thirty or forty acres in extent, and comparatively unwooded, forms an admirable area for the planting of guns, as well as the maneuvering of troops.

The riflemen could see the British ensign flaunting above the sharp pine-tops around the summit; and it was soon evident

that the enemy had not been caught napping. For, as the rangers moved up the easy lower slopes in close order, the loud report of cannon reverberated among the crags, and a cannon-ball went whizzing over their heads.

"They'll have to shoot better than that, colonel," said Lieutenant Wilton, Cleaveland's second in command, who rode at his side.

"Perhaps they will," was the reply. "Trot out, lads!" continued the colonel; and the band moved up the hill at a brisker pace.

As the order was given, another ball came hurtling over their heads, this time in much closer proximity than before; and it was evident that the red-coat gunners were getting a much better range. Indeed, pretty soon, the iron messengers came crashing through the woods at an alarming rate. One of the riflemen fell dead from his horse, and another one, badly wounded by a splinter, was unhorsed a few seconds thereafter. Then the boom of ordinance further away apprised them that the coöperating forces were, probably, ascending the mountain on its opposite side.

"Halt!" cried the sharp, clear voice of Cleaveland, as the party reached the almost impenetrable timber of the second rise of the mountain.

They halted and dismounted, tethering their animals to the trees, and forming in line, with their rifles ready.

"Look well to your flints, lads, and wait the word. We'll be the first to reach the top," cried Cleaveland.

"Forward, now!" he continued; "forward—MARCH!" and the gallant band moved briskly up through the trees, which, however, were so dense as to materially mar the solidity of their column.

It soon became more open, though, and, with a fierce backwoods war-whoop, the Kentuckians rushed to the summit and delivered a telling volley among the red-coats. The gunners were shot at the cannon, and the piece effectually spiked, before the enemy could recover from the suddenness of the onset. But, they soon rallied with the bayonet, when the riflemen, clubbing their guns, were compelled to give way, and retired a short distance down the slope, to reload under cover of the timber. And now, the ringing cheers of Colonel Campbell's men came from the other side, followed by the simultaneous crash of their rifles, and

the enemy were compelled to give the largest share of their attention to these new and more numerous assailants. They were likewise driven back at the point of the bayonet; when the *third* party of stormers under the lead of the brave Colonels Shelby and Williams, burst over the summit, and poured in *their* compliments, and the surrounded British were barely in time to repulse this attack with the bayonet before Cleaveland's party were again at the edge of the flat summit, pouring in another galling volley on their backs.

"Take to the trees, lads!" shouted Cleaveland; and, in a few seconds, the riflemen seemed to have vanished in air, so quickly did they obey the order and their backwoods training, and dart into cover, behind trees, stumps, logs and rocks, from which they kept up a desultory but effective fire.

"Huzza! There comes Campbell again!" shouted Lieutenant Wilton, from his perch in the fork of an elm-tree, and he brought up his piece to his shoulder, and let it off gleefully, as he spoke.

Sure enough, again Campbell's brave fellows broke over the summit, pouring in their deadly fire, while Shelby made *his* second attack almost simultaneously, from another quarter.

The enemy, though vastly preponderating in numbers, could reply but poorly with their wide-shooting muskets, and relied on the bayonet. Again and again would they drive their assailants down the mountain, only to turn to a fresh party in their rear.

"Be ready, lads! be ready!" shouted Cleaveland, as Shelby's indomitable heroes appeared a third time at the top, pouring in their volley, and this time holding their own against the hitherto irresistible bayonets, with clubbed rifles, pistols and swords.

"Break cover, and fall in line!" cried Cleaveland again, and, almost sooner than it takes to tell it, the concealed hunters were in solid column on the open ground, with but small loss so far.

"Forward—MARCH! *This* time we don't break!" roared the colonel, waving his sword above his head, and the merry men sprung forward and stood on the bare crest.

Crack! crack! Bang! bang! And again their pieces were unerringly discharged, while Campbell's "screamers" simultaneously appeared on the opposite side, and also held their ground against the charging bayonets.

"Club your guns, and strike 'em down!"

shouted Cleaveland, as the bristling surge of bayonets rushed toward him.

In a few seconds came the shock. The regulars and Tories, led on by the gallant Ferguson, sword in hand, burst like a devastating torrent upon the heroic riflemen, who defended themselves the best way they could, giving club-blows for bayonet thrusts—falling, dying, but standing firm, while Campbell's and Shelby's men came on from the opposite side, with triumphant shouts.

In a few moments an indescribable *melee* ensued; a confused mass of yelling, striking, thrusting men, with the shrill tones of command occasionally springing up an octave higher than the general roar. Cleaveland was bravely battling in the midst of the foe, when a fierce, terrible, joyous shout greeted him, and he turned to perceive the figure of Heartstead Gleason making at him through the press.

"Thank God! it has come at last!" ejaculated Cleaveland, fervently; and, answering the challenge of his foe with a war-cry as fierce and as deadly, he sprung toward him.

For one wild instant they hung together, their meeting blades ringing as they clashed, but a sudden eddy in the fierce tide in which they were engulfed swept them apart before a blow could be struck.

In vain did Cleaveland struggle to reach his enemy, but the smoke now hid him, and the baffled avenger bit his lip in anger, and sought other foes. The regulars, wearied by the repeated charges they had made, were gradually losing ground, when Ferguson, frantic at the prospect of defeat, sprung at Cleaveland, pistol in one hand, sword in the other.

"Surrender! you dastard rebel!" he shouted.

"Not this time," was the cool reply.

Crack went Ferguson's pistol. The American felt the hot ball sear his cheek, but sprung forward with waving sword. Their weapons met, and Ferguson thrust fiercely. Cleaveland received the blade of his opponent in his coat-sleeve, and, by a sudden twist of his arm, broke the weapon in two; before the Britisher could recover, the blade of the American pierced his breast, and he fell to the ground, expiring almost instantly.

With Ferguson's fall the despair of the enemy was complete. They broke and fled in all directions. The main body, however, reached the inclosure in the center, where

their tents were situated. The victorious riflemen again formed into their separate columns, and advanced to complete their work, with deafening cheers. But they were met by a messenger requesting a parley, which was granted by Colonel Campbell, who had assumed command of the combined forces of the Americans. In a few moments the enemy capitulated, and were immediately surrounded and disarmed by the exulting backwoodsmen and mountaineers.

So closed the battle of King's Mountain, with victory to the American arms.

The British loss was three hundred killed and wounded, besides one hundred regulars and seven hundred loyalists or Tories taken prisoners, with two cannon and one thousand five hundred stand of arms. The American loss was comparatively trifling in numbers, but the gallant Colonel Williams was included among the slain.

"Thus," says the historian, "was Cornwallis encountered, at the very commencement of his invading campaign, with a stinging defeat, which comprised the destruction of more than a fourth part of his army, the cutting off of all his expected supplies from the Tories of the upper country, and the advance of a large body of victorious mountaineers upon the van of his march. Under these circumstances, he felt himself compelled to retire again to Camden, with the intention of refreshing and reinforcing his army for a new attempt. He afterward moved to Winnsborough, and there awaited reinforcements, which did not reach him until the last part of October."

Cleaveland closely scrutinized the prisoners. To his great disappointment and chagrin, he found that Gleason must have been one of the few who had escaped. Confident that this man was the villain from whom the captive maiden had the most to fear, his gloomy forebodings returned to him in their full force. For, now that the villain had escaped the fatality of war, would he not return immediately to his victim? The thought was maddening in the extreme; but there was no present remedy, as it would be impossible for him to leave his command at this moment, when victory was to be improved, for a flying visit to Misty Mount.

The fight had lasted many hours; and, as night fell, the weary troops built their camp-fires on the field, while detachments were detailed to assist the surgeons in the

care of the wounded and to bury the dead.

As upon the first night of his march, Cleaveland was anxious and restless, and, when most of the troops, victors and vanquished, were reposing in the moonlight, he sat, as before, alone and despairing by a camp-fire. Unable to control his anxiety, which every moment increased, he strolled around the plain, and, at length, hardly caring whither his steps tended, he went down the mountain among the trees. The deeper gloom of the forest seemed to accord more congenially with the mood of his spirit. As he walked through the trees toward a little open glade, which he had descried, he heard the sound of other footsteps than his own, and he paused expectantly, with his hand on his sword. The footsteps came from the opposite direction, and were very near. To his utter, joyous astonishment, a human form strode into the bright moonlight of the little glade, and that form was Heartstead Gleason's!

Cleaveland unsheathed his weapon, and sprung to meet him.

"At last! at last!" he shouted, with a terrible rapture in his tones.

Heartstead also drew his weapon. On the gloomy, haggard visage of the young Tory there also sat an expression of grim satisfaction as he faced his foe.

"This is to be to the death!" he growled. "Thank God we are alone!"

"Ay, thank God we *are* alone!" exclaimed Cleaveland; and he crossed swords with his enemy without further preface.

It was a terrible thing, these lonely men preparing for a deadly contest there in the profound, moonlighted solitude of that little glade in the forest. Both dextrous swordsmen, they fought for many moments in silent suspense, without either attaining any particular advantage. At length, however, Cleaveland was slightly wounded in the hand, and retaliated by pricking his adversary in return. Then Heartstead, losing patience, rushed in desperately, and was met by a hand as steady, a temper as fierce as his own. They closed. In the terrible struggle which ensued, Cleaveland received another and severe wound. The fight merged into a kind of desperate wrestle with their left hands, their swords playing fiercely from their right. An unlucky twig or tuft of grass caught the colonel's foot as he was maneuvering backward, and he fell heavily on his back, the onset of the

Tory being so close and impetuous that he also stumbled and fell upon his prostrate foe. Almost despairing, but gathering his remaining strength, Cleaveland was preparing for a superhuman effort to release himself and continue the contest, when he was astonished to feel his adversary still lying heavily, but almost motionless, upon him. Casting him off, he rose to his feet, when the prostrate Heartstead rolled over, his face uppermost, and a little rill of blood was spouting from a wound in his breast. He had stumbled forward with his whole weight on the point of the colonel's sword; and the contest was over. He still breathed, but it was evident that the wound was mortal, for the life-blood sprung out in fitful jets with every heave of the laboring chest. His cheek was very white, and his eyes rolled terribly, as he made a feeble motion with his hand for his adversary to draw nearer. Cleaveland knelt by the side of the dying man, and inclined his ear to catch his last words.

"Forgive—forgive me!" gasped the sufferer, with the utmost difficulty. "Ida is safe as yet—but still in danger—hid in cavern—northern side Misty Mount—half-way up. Lose not a moment! Fly to her! She is still in danger—awful danger! Judith, the fiend—the—"

The death-rattle in his throat cut short the disconnected sentence. The wounded Tory clutched the grass with his outstretched hands, gasped for breath, and fell back—a corpse.

Cleaveland arose to his feet and eyed the body of his foe with that mournful, respectful glance which is the victor's tribute to vanquished valor. There were remnants of manly beauty in the white face of the dead Tory—old, old beauty, it is true, long since depraved and almost obliterated, but a beauty which might have promised better things in better days. But such feelings as were produced in the victor by this mournful spectacle soon gave place to livelier and more important emotions.

From what he had gathered from the brief confession of the dying man, it was evident that Ida was still in imminent peril—from whom he could scarcely imagine, as he had never before heard of Judith; nevertheless his anxiety was strung to the highest pitch. He returned to the camp, to confer with his superior immediately, and, cost what it might, procure a furlough to revisit the valley. But this ceremony was

saved him by his meeting Colonel Campbell—who had been roused from his slumber by a courier from General Gates—and his being presented with an order from the Commander-in-Chief, ordering him, Cleaveland, to return with his command to Valleyton at the earliest moment, to prevent a rising of the Tory population, which was momentarily apprehended. Overjoyed at this intelligence, Cleaveland hastily narrated the duel in which he had just been engaged, with the request that the colonel would have the body of his foeman interred before leaving the mountain; which was readily granted. Cleaveland—who seemed to be proof against fatigue and sleeplessness—then busied himself for the remainder of the night with preparations for his journey north-westward. At break of day his battle-thinned and war-worn troop of veterans were mustered for their departure at beat of drum and blast of bugle, and, after a warm parting from their brothers in arms, they proceeded down the mountain side, leaving behind them the gory field in whose conquest they had borne so honorable a part. Reaching the commencement of the second descent, where their horses were picketed, the little cavalcade—now numbering scarcely one hundred and fifty—remounted, and were soon gulping, hot haste, in the direction of Valleyton.

CHAPTER X.

Judith.

FLRANCE. We will have rain anon.

1st MURDERER. Let it come down.

MACBETH.

AFTER Heartstead's departure from the cavern, the captive passed the time in an agony of doubt and fear as to what might be the next attempt—scarcely trusting herself to slumber, though worn out with anxiety and long vigils. The days and nights went over her in her subterranean dungeon without her knowledge. It was always night to her; whenever she looked out of her lattice, and glanced upward through the gloom of the echoing chasm, she saw the stars shining brightly. So she seemed to lose all account of the flight of time, and her terrible anxiety grew into a morbid, all-possessing fear, which seemed to be blighting her to the grave. When, overpowered, she would occasionally relapse into a fitful slumber, the least sound would arouse her, and she expected, the next instant, to hear

the noisy bolts withdrawn, and to behold the form of Heartstead. Judith entered every now and then, to bring her water and food, and to replenish the lamp with oil. She still maintained the meek, obsequious manner with which she had at first undertaken to deceive her victim; but, Ida had grown to distrust her, and came to receive her attentions in gloomy silence.

Once, Judith having forgotten to bolt the door, the prisoner was filled with a vague hope that her deliverance was at hand. She waited till the steps of her jailer had died away, and then tremblingly tried to open the massive panel. After having almost exhausted her strength in fruitless efforts, the portal at last yielded and swung open. The trembling captive shrunk back from the profound gloom by which she found herself confronted; for the door had opened into the vast inner temple of the cavern. Taking courage, however, and with a prayer to God on her lips, the maiden took the glimmering lamp which lighted her cell, and proceeded with cautious footsteps out into the gloom. The lamp was a feeble aid, but it was far better than none. She crept around the wall of the cavern, not daring to go straight across, as her imagination depicted some frightful gulf of horrors as existing somewhere in the center of the unexplored cave. She went around by the wall, to the left of her dungeon door, and had not proceeded many yards before she noticed a small cleft in the wall of the cave. Curiously grasping the thin edge of a long, flat rock, which seemed to be loosely set against the opening, she was much surprised to find that the rock was not only light and easily handled, but that she could displace it. Setting down her lamp, she exerted herself, and drew away the thin stone, like a folding-door, and was further surprised to see revealed a square-shaped opening in the wall of the cavern, which would easily admit a human form. Determined to explore still further, she took up her lamp, and, stooping low, made her way into the opening, when she suddenly found herself in a small sub-cavern, fully as capacious as her own cell, but apparently not lately entered, as nothing about the rude walls or ceiling bore tokens of the smoothing hand of artificial improvement. After she had retraced her steps and easily replaced the slab before the opening, she paused in thought. If she should not succeed in making her escape—if she was again immured in her dungeon, and another

attempt made upon her life or honor—what an excellent thing it would be if she were only enabled to fly to this natural dungeon—of whose existence, in all probability, her captors were in ignorance—shut herself in, and bide her time for escape. But, alas! the thought of that adamant door of her dungeon forced her to abandon her hope so soon as formed. She proceeded on her uncertain way around the great cave, and was at length again filled with hope by the appearance of a faint white glimmer, as of her long-lost daylight, which seemed to proceed from an opening a few paces in front of her. Almost satisfied that this must be the entrance proper to the cave, the trembling captive sprang toward it with a nimbler step. It was, indeed, the entrance she had guessed it to be; but, before she could take a step into it, she started back with a cry of terror; for the dark figure of Judith rose like a ghost in her path. If Ida still retained a doubt as to Judith's treachery, that doubt must have been dissipated by the dark, mocking smile that wreathed the scornful lips of the quadroon.

Without uttering a word, the latter seized her trembling victim by the wrist, snatched the lamp from her hand, and almost dragged her straight across the vast chamber to her former dungeon. Thrusting the captive within the open door, and following her in, the quadroon replaced the lamp on its dangling chain. Then, suddenly grasping the other wrist of her victim, she forced her back upon the couch, and, before the terrified Ida could utter a shriek or make a struggle, the quick hand of the quadroon had taken the precious dagger from its concealment in her bosom. The unhappy victim expected, the next instant, to feel the lost weapon quivering in her heart. But, Judith merely smiled again, with that dark smile of hers, stuck the captured prize in her belt, and departed without a word, clanging the heavy door to behind her, and shooting the bolts with spiteful vehemence.

Greatly terrified with what had passed, the unfortunate victim gave way to tears, believing herself as indeed lost. The iron firmness and steady courage with which she seemed to have been endowed since her capture, returned, however, ere long, to her breast, and she paced the floor of her prison, pale, but collected. Now, since her precious, heaven-sent dagger was gone, she knew not upon what to rely; and at length, as she had done many times before, fell upon her

knees, and implored the aid of her God, since by man she seemed forsaken. Much comforted, she arose, and continued her busy thoughts of escape. Her faculties were sharpened by this additional peril, and whetted by the glimpse of daylight which she had lately caught. Suddenly the thought flashed upon her, that perhaps the sub-cavern which she had discovered but a few paces from her own door, might have a natural opening into the wall of the chasm in the rear, something in the manner of her own window. In an instant she was at the window, and sitting half-way out of it, with her lamp upraised. Could it be? Scarcely twelve inches from the side of her lattice she discovered a small hole in the side of the chasm—a very little hole, indeed, but one into which she could thrust her arm to the elbow. Forgetful of the tremendous gulf that yawned beneath, with trembling eagerness she rapidly enlarged the aperture by tearing away fragment after fragment of the loose, soft rock by which she was environed. Soon an opening was made amply sufficient to admit her form; she prepared to enter her new-found sanctuary. But then, for the first time, did the thought of the hideous, unknown depths below, recur to her mind, with all its force. Commending herself to God, she set the lamp just within the opening, and commenced the perilous feat with the utmost caution. In a few seconds she was in the neighboring cave, lamp in hand. A moment's examination convinced her that her new sanctuary was identical with the one she had discovered, and previously entered. The slab was as she had placed it over the outer entrance, but she did not remove it, knowing that another attempt to escape by the main cavern would be a fruitless and perilous task. It was enough for her, for the present, to know that she had a secret hiding-place to which to flee in her hour of need.

Much of the same sort of stone or slate, with which she had blocked up the front entrance, was lying in the cave, some of it quite loose. Detaching a large, thin slab, she propped it up against the window she had contrived, and found it to fit pretty well.

She calculated that she could escape into this cell, and shut herself in, in a little less time than it usually took to shoot back the many bolts, and open her own dungeon door from without. She also thought that,

by a glance through the key-hole of that door, she could make herself aware of the character and intention of the person about to enter, and immediately, in case of need, beat a mysterious retreat. Wonderfully elated at her new discovery, the maiden took down the slab from the chasm-opening, and returned through her own lattice with her lamp in her hand.

But, she was not contented until she had made many successive trips from one cave to the other, in order to make herself accustomed to the sensation of the deep chasm beneath her feet, and to increase her nimbleness in making the transit.

CHAPTER XI.

The Rescue.

UPON the third morning which succeeded the battle of King's Mountain, Judith was standing just within the outer entrance of the great cave, when the lofty figure of the Indian chief appeared before her from without. He was frightfully emaciated; a great fever was burning in his eyes, and he seemed to come from a long journey, his garments were so torn and soiled.

"Wandalo is obedient to the Passion-Flower," he said, humbly, and in strangely hollow tones.

"Yes, you are indeed true, my glorious lover!" exclaimed Judith. "But, what do you bring? You were at the battle?"

He pointed to a bloody bandage on his arm by way of answer.

"But Heartstead—where is he?"

"The trampler of the Lily is before the throne of the Great Gardener."

"What mean you?"

"He is dead."

A fierce exclamation broke from the lips of the quadron at this intelligence. In a few hurried words, Wandalo related the occurrences of the battle—the fight, the British defeat, and the midnight duel, to which he had been a witness.

"The lightning's kill you! Why didn't you aid the Tory?" cried Judith, wrathfully.

"When two braves are equally pitted, breast to breast, the Thunder-Mocker does not cast his power in either scale," was the proud reply.

"Forgive my anger, Wandalo! Besides, you could not aid, if he died in the moment of apparent victory."

She leaned her head a moment on her hand, as if lost in thought.

"The moment is near—very near, Wandalo," at length she said.

He looked at her inquiringly.

"The moment when we two shall take to the distant mountains," she added.

He sprung forward and embraced her with trembling tenderness.

"Come, my Passion-Flower, come; let us go at once," he cried. "Joy shall come upon us from the clouds; we will wither together in the distant dingles. Come, let us go. What! and the sweet Lily is to be left in her whiteness?"

"Yea; in her whiteness, but not in her bloom," was the somber reply. "Wandalo, wait till I return."

"Stay; why do you leave me?" he cried, as she turned into the cavern.

"To pluck the Lily from her stalk," said Judith, with a terrible smile, at the same time touching the bright dagger in her belt, with a menacing glance.

"You will not slay her? You—"

A low laugh, that made him shiver to his heart, was her only answer. The Indian fell upon his knees in an agony of supplication.

"Judith, my Passion-Flower, my wild, fierce Queen!" he moaned, "spare her—spare her!"

"NEVER!" cried the stormy woman, her whole figure quivering in the awful wrath that possessed her. "Never! One doom she has escaped; but there is always time to kill—to kill!"

"Nay, but why the knife?" exclaimed the savage, hoping to gain delay; "why the knife, my Passion-Flower? Starvation, poison—"

"It shall not be. These hands shall let out the life of her she hates. There is no time for slower means—our cavern is no longer a secret. Wandalo, await me here. Be sure you do not follow."

He stood as if rooted to the spot, and she passed within.

Taking a small lamp from a cleft in the wall, she lighted it and passed straight forward toward the door of her victim's cell. But, when she had reached the center of the great chamber, she wheeled suddenly round and confronted Wandalo, who was stealthily following her.

"Begone!" she cried, fiercely.

The Indian did not stir; it was evident that her power over him was in danger.

Slowly she raised her hand, her eyes blazing with the still malignity of an angry pythoness.

"Begone!" she hissed, flinging him away with a repelling gesture, but not touching him.

Wandalo disappeared like a shadow, and with a smile of conscious triumph the woman proceeded to the prisoner's cell with stealthy steps. She put her ear to the door—there was no sound, and she chuckled to herself to think that her victim was asleep.

Swiftly drawing the bolts, Judith, holding her lamp in her left hand and her dagger in her right, burst into the apartment.

It was empty.

With a hoarse cry, she sprang into the room. The window was open—the bird had flown.

Whither?

She sprang upon the sill of the lattice; but the loud echo of many feet entering the main cavern recalled her to her usual caution. Instantly blowing out her lamp, she crept back into the great chamber and listened. Tramp! tramp! came the tread of armed men. And then she saw them bringing in torches. She knew of a secret chamber not far off, into which she hastily concealed herself, just before the entire cavern became brilliantly illuminated from the torches which were being brought in.

"That must be the prison!" exclaimed old Godfrey, who was in advance of the soldiers, at the same time pointing to the open door of the dungeon.

"Forward—MARCH!" cried Cleaveland, who was immediately behind him, and the troop wheeled across the great chamber, followed by the torch-bearers.

And now Judith, who watched from her hiding-place, saw a sight which made her teeth meet through her nether lip, with suppressed rage.

Just as the foremost of the band of rescuers were within a dozen yards or so of the cell, what appeared to be a fragment of the wall of the chamber fell out with a loud clang, and Ida tottered out of the solid rock, and swooned at her father's feet.

The joy with which that anxious father gathered his long-lost child to his arms, the emotions of her soldier-lover, the wild shouts of honest exultation that rose from the throng of neighbors and soldiers, may be imagined, but not adequately described. Water was hastily sprinkled over the faint-

ing girl. She slowly revived, but still clung to her father with feeble strength. But, in the midst of this joy, while the old man bent tenderly over his child, a hideous apparition startled the spectators.

Judith, unable any longer to control her ferocious spite, suddenly leaped from her hiding-place, near which the old man and his daughter were leaning, and raised her dagger to plunge it into Ida's breast.

So unexpected was this maneuver, so ghostly the appearance of the quadroom, that every one, for an instant, seemed petrified with horror. But Cleaveland, the first to recover, struck the uplifted arm with the scabbard of his sword, before mischief could be effected, and, grasping Judith, hurled her far away from her innocent victim. Seeing herself foiled, the quadroom did not attempt an escape from the cavern, but sprang upon a little ledge in the wall, and, clambering cat-like, with her dagger in her teeth, gained a foothold far above their heads.

"Woman, surrender yourself immediately!" exclaimed the colonel.

"I will not."

"Sergeant Downing," said the colonel, turning quietly to one of his men, "enforce the surrender of that woman."

The sergeant touched his cap respectfully, stepped briskly out from among his comrades, and confronted the scornful and inaccessible quadroom.

"I will ask you to surrender three times," said the sergeant; "if you refuse, or deign no answer to the last question, I will shoot you."

"One question will be quite sufficient," said Judith.

The sergeant made no answer, but quietly cocked his rifle, primed, and brought the butt to his shoulder, with the muzzle pointed at her.

"Once—surrender!" he exclaimed.

She made no answer.

"Twice—surrender!"

No answer.

After a long interval:

"Thrice—surrender!"

No answer.

The threatening gun was kept upraised for a long time, and then lowered without being discharged.

"Ha! ha! ha!" laughed the mocking woman, in derision.

"Unhappy being!" exclaimed Cleaveland, with horror, and yet with an unconscious admiration of her bravery, "what motive

could you have to attempt the life of this innocent maiden?"

"Ask him!" she cried, pointing to old Godfrey, who averted his face.

"I know nothing that could prompt such a hellish deed as this," he murmured.

"You lie!" yelled Judith, from her rocky perch. "Who destroyed my mother?—your sire! Who destroyed me? Who made me what I am?—you and your brother, Rupert! Oh! did you think my vengeance would ever sleep? I made old Gleason, my purchaser, follow you hither, for I wanted to be near the man who made me a slave! The grass is not yet green over your son's corpse. It was through my influence that Wandalo shot him dead from the distant thicket, while he was sunning himself on your porch. It was I who hounded on Heartstead to carry off your Ida. I had a double doom for her. I was to kill her twice—in her happiness and in her life. The death of my instrument, Heartstead, prevented the former—you have torn her from the latter fate. I was in her room to take her life, when her absence and your entrance saved her. Farewell! my spirit will not brook a failure. You ask me to surrender; see, I do so, but not to you!"

As she spoke, she raised the glittering dagger with a strong, steady hand, and plunged it to the hilt into her own heart. She tottered for a moment on the edge of the high shelf, reeled, caught at the air with her hands, and pitched down on the rocky pavement, as dead as any of the loosened fragments of the wall that came rattling down after her.

There was not a man of that hardy assemblage who did not shudder at what he had heard and seen. Fortunately, Ida had again fainted when threatened by the monster, so that she, at least, escaped the horrible recital and spectacle. Mr. Gwin now lost no time in bearing her out of the cavern, followed by one of his servants; but a strange atmosphere of horror kept the remainder of the party glued to the spot, eyeing each other in blank amazement. While standing thus they were startled by a wild, savage war-whoop, and Wandalo stood before them.

"Ha! ha!" he laughed, dancing up to the party. "Ha! ha! Wandalo not got long to wait. Soon going down—down to the bottom of Misty Mountain. Whoop!"

His eyes were fixed upon the lifeless body of the quadrone. He did not pause, but

gathered up the mangled body in his arms, as lightly as a feather's weight, and continued his wild dance.

"The Passion-Flower has gone to sleep. I'll take her down to the bottom of the mountain. Sweet place down at the bottom of the mountain—down in the heart of the Misty Mountain!"

He skipped out of the cave with the body in his arms, followed by the wondering throng. They saw him scale the steep sides—up and up—still holding the body, as if it was that of a little baby, wondering what would come next. At last they reached the fissure or gulf which Ida had noticed as running down through the lofty ridge at the back of the cave. It only averaged a width of about twelve or fifteen feet, ran irregularly up the steep, in some places almost concealed, but was evidently of awful depth. Far up the mountain they beheld Wandalo, dancing with his burden on the edge of this fearful gulf.

"Ha! ha! We're going down!" he laughed. "Lilies don't grow there—only Passion-Flowers—bright, fierce Passion-Flowers! Ha! ha! We'll go down to the bottom of the mountain—down to the heart of the Misty Mountain!"

He sprung from the edge with the quadrone's corpse in his arms, and disappeared. One more wild laugh they heard, and all was silent. The party looked at each other in speechless horror. But, at length, as they turned to descend the mountain, one of the riflemen loosened a great fragment from the edge of the gulf. All paused to listen. Boom! boom! clang! clang! crick! crick! went the tumbling mass, the sound dying from a loud thunder to something like the tick of a watch, and then gradually melting away into silence. Then the party began to descend the mountain.

That was a deep, deep tomb for Wandalo and Judith!

CHAPTER XII.

Winning the Heiress.

Two months after the events which have just been recorded, in the early portion of December, Cleaveland again found himself in the vicinity of Valleyton, he having been summoned away from that locality only a day or two after the recovery of Ida Gwin. He had never as yet dared to breathe his

love in her ear—indeed, little time had been afforded him since her rescue.

But now he approached the lovely valley again under fairer auspices than ever before. It is true, he was not without that natural diffidence which most lovers of refinement must experience as they approach that embarrassing period which is vulgarly called "popping the question;" but almost everything bore a brighter aspect now.

He was without the harassing cares, with regard to the condition of his country, which had formerly weighed so heavily upon the spirits of all true patriots. Certainly, the war was not yet over; but then a stage was reached whence, it seemed, could be discerned "the beginning of the end." Gates, who, as we have seen, had lost something of the high reputation which he had gained in the conquest of Burgoyne, had just been superseded in the command of the Southern army by the brilliant and popular General Greene. Cornwallis had not yet recovered from the disastrous effects of his compulsory retreat southward after the battle of King's Mountain—although large reinforcements were now reaching him—and was bungling forward in his new campaign, which was soon to have a stinging check at the battle of the Cowpens and with Morgan's victory. In fact, the old year was going out finely, with every prospect that American victory would inaugurate the new—at least in the long-overrun, long-suffering Southern Colonies.

Then, while Cleaveland had been away, he had received several glowing, friendly letters from old Godfrey Gwin, and one sweet little pink-tinted treasure of an epistle from Ida, breathing the very spirit of gratitude and warm friendship for him, which he had ever since worn in his bosom. He had also received news that the last of the denizens of the valley who could revive the recollection to contemplate anew those horrible tragedies of the mountain to which he had been a witness, was now no longer of the living. This was old Jacob Gleason, who had at last, burdened with many crimes and the incessant anxiety entailed upon him by his ill-gotten wealth, perished in self-compelled indigence and misery.

So that it was with a far lighter heart than formerly that Cleaveland found himself cantering over the well-known road from Valleyton to Misty Mount with two months' furlough at his disposal. And there he saw the noble old host waiting to

welcome him from the porch of his hospitable mansion. In a few moments the colonel had alighted and his hand was in the warm grasp of Mr. Gwin.

Ida came tripping out at the sound of horses' feet. She at first colored up at the sight of the colonel, but immediately advanced and accorded a frank hand and a warm welcome.

Perhaps her cheek was a trifle thinner—her beauty a trifle more subdued, than when she was first introduced to our readers; but two months was a short time for such a delicate being to overcome the effects of that terrible experience in the Tories' cave. And Cleaveland, at any rate, thought her beauty holier, lovelier, tenderer than it had ever before appeared.

"And how is *mon amie*?" he inquired, gayly taking her little hand in his own.

"*Assez bien; et Monsieur le colonel?*" she replied, demurely.

"In perfect health," said he, laughing. "I propose a return to the mother tongue. I have no intention showing the poverty of my *patois* along side of the pretty French of *Mademoiselle* Ida."

"As you will, colonel."

As he passed up stairs to his baggage, which had arrived before him, he could not help thinking that she was a little cool toward him, and immediately began to grow miserable. But his buoyant hopes returned when her happy smile greeted him upon his descent to dinner.

Well, they fell back into their old delightful ways; rides and rambles by day-time, whist, the piano, reading and singing by night; and it seemed more than likely that half of the gallant colonel's furlough would be frittered away before he mustered courage to read his fate in the blue eyes of that simple maiden.

But one day, at about noon, seeking for Ida to take a walk, he found that she had gone out alone, and thereupon took his hat and cane to go in search of her. It was almost in the middle of December, but the day was sunshiny and quite warm. The earth, it is true, had lost something of the splendor in which he had seen her in her mid-autumn robes; but there was something soothingly sweet in the soberness which had come upon her in the soft winter of her age.

The colonel was so fortunate as to find the object of his quest in a little summer-house a short distance from the mansion.

He approached her with a laughing remonstrance at her having endeavored to shake off his "cumbersome society," as he called it. She protested her innocence so earnestly that he was sorry at having reproved her, even in jest.

He sat down by her side in the little bower.

"Do you not sometimes grow sad in the winter?" he asked.

"Yes," she replied; "it is not so sweet as the gayer months."

"I think sweeter," said he.

"Pray why?"

"The spring is gay and lively," said the pensive colonel, "the summer magnificent, the autumn grand. But I find a sweetness in the gentle solemnity of our southern winter which is dearer to me than all the rest. Perhaps it is in accordance with my own nature, which has mostly been somewhat lonesome and sad."

"I should think," said she, looking straight before her, "that it would have been somewhat otherwise with one so gifted as you. You have every thing calculated to make new friends and endear old ones—position—courtesy—genius."

"You flatter me, pretty one; what do you know of my having genius?" said he, laughing.

"Oh, I am sure you have. I—" she paused, and said no more.

"Well, suppose your conjecture true. What to me are these advantages, if they are unable to procure for me that which I most crave?"

"What can that be?"

"Sympathy—love."

She thought of the miniature which Jenny had seen around his neck, and merely said, with downcast eyes:

"I should think that this was not so difficult to attain."

As she said this, he hesitated, then took her hand in his. She trembled a little, as if about to withdraw it, but, nevertheless, let it remain where it was.

"Ida!" said Cleaveland, with deep emotion, and she trembled again, for she had never before heard him address her by her first name. "Ida!" repeated the colonel, softly, "it would, indeed, give me a wonderful and enduring gladness, could I be persuaded that *my* love may be attained."

She still held her eyes cast down, and was silent.

"Ida, I must speak boldly at last, and

meet my fate, whatever that may be," he continued; "I love you—passionately, utterly—as much, I believe, as it is in the power of man to love."

Still she was silent, but red and pale by turns.

"Speak to me, Ida," he murmured, pressing her hand strongly, "speak, and let me know my fate!"

Then, as she turned to him, and laid her head upon his shoulder, he caught her to his breast with a glad, wild impulse, and their lips clung together in a first, long, passionate kiss. A new era began to bloom through her life as she lay there folded in his warm caress, and he—his thirty years were melting back to his childhood, his old boy-dreams were becoming realized, his life was blazing with the new luster.

"My own! My one, bright darling!" he murmured. "And you really love me? I do not dream?"

"I loved you the first time I saw you," she said, with a deep blush, and again he pressed his hungry lips to hers.

"And yet," she at length said, looking up with an arch smile, "I was at one time very—very jealous."

"Of what, *mon amie*?" he asked, with an air of the most perfect innocence.

"Of the original of your miniature," she replied.

"And how did you know that I had a miniature, pray?"

"Jenny told me. She saw it one morning."

"Here it is, my darling," said Cleaveland, taking the jeweled picture from his breast and laying it before her. "Do you see any thing in it to be jealous of now?"

"Yes," she said, with a pretty pout; "for it is far more lovely than I."

"That is not truth, my love; but look again, and carefully. Are you still jealous?"

"Upon the whole, it looks something like yourself," she replied, evasively.

"Yes," said Cleaveland, with emotion; "and even you, Ida, could not take this miniature from me; for it is the portrait of one who must, at this moment, be smiling down upon you and me—my mother in heaven! She died when I was but a child."

Ida felt a warm tear fall upon her cheek as he uttered the last words. She looked up quickly, twined her arms about his neck, and kissed him tenderly, unblushingly.

Then the miniature was restored to its

place in his bosom, and pretty soon the happy lovers were smiling and chatting as gayly as before. Presently they heard the dinner-bell from the house, and they sauntered homeward, arm in arm.

"Something's been going on between two young people of my acquaintance," said old Godfrey Gwin, as they entered the drawing-room, and he immediately put on a very severe expression of countenance.

"Now, pa, don't!" said Ida, running up to him, putting her arms around his neck, and hiding her blushes in his great shirt-ruffle.

"Ha! ha!" laughed the savage parent,

kissing her. "It's all right, my girl, and nothing to be ashamed of. How are you, Cleaveland, my boy? We'll crack an extra bottle of port for dinner to-day!" And he shook the colonel's hand heartily, and led the way to dinner.

Well, to shorten an already too long story, before another month had flown, there was a gay wedding at the mansion, whereat Henry Cleaveland, a soldier of fortune, but a rising chief on the winning side, was united for life to Miss Ida Gwin, the fairest girl in America, and the Heiress of Misty Mount.

THE END.

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MY MOTHER'S GENTLE VOICE,
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